

THE MOST EFFECTIVE PRACTICES
FOR FACILITATING SPIRITUAL MATURITY
IN THE CHILDREN OF SALVATION ARMY OFFICERS

A THESIS-PROJECT
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To Staci. My loving wife and closest friend.

Thank you.

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GLOSSARY

Appointment – The assigned ministry in which a Salvation Army officer serves.

Cadet – The rank given to a Salvation Army officer recruit while going through the 2-year residency at the College for Officer Training.

Captain – This is typically the rank given to Salvation Army officers after their successful completion of 5 years of commissioned officership, following their completion of the 2-year residency at The Salvation Army College for Officer Training. This rank is held until the officer reaches 15 years of active officer service, after which he or she is promoted to the rank of major.

Commissioned – This is the process whereby, upon graduation of the 2-year residency at The Salvation Army's College for Officer Training, cadets are given the rank of Lieutenant, ordained as pastors of The Salvation Army, and given an appointment from which to serve as Salvation Army officers.

Commissioner – The rank held by the Territorial Commander, which is the highest-ranking officer in each territorial headquarters, who has the responsibility of commissioning, ordaining, and appointing all officers within the territory of which the Commissioner serves.

Corps – The quasi-military term, used by The Salvation Army, that refers to a congregation or Salvation Army church.

Corps Cadet – The rank given to a teenage member of The Salvation Army, who commits to The Salvation Army's 5-year Bible study program, called the Corps Cadet program.

Dedication – The Salvation Army's formal ceremony of dedicating a child to Christ.

Division – A Salvation Army Division includes a state, or multiple states, within a Territory that are considered somewhat autonomous from the other Divisions. Each Division has its own Divisional Staff, including a Divisional Commander, A General Secretary, a Divisional Secretary, a Divisional Finance Secretary, and a Divisional Youth Secretary, all of which have their own team of employed staff.

Junior Soldier – This is the rank given to a child, beginning at the age of 7, who is committed to serve Christ as a member of The Salvation Army.

Quarters - The quasi-military term, used by The Salvation Army, to refer to a parsonage, which is a Salvation Army owned home lived in by every Salvation Army officer and their family.

Salvation Army Officer – An ordained pastor of The Salvation Army.

Senior Soldier – The rank given to adult and teenage members of The Salvation Army.

Session of Cadets – A cohort of Salvation Army officer recruits in training at The Salvation Army College for Officer Training.

Southern Territory – The 12 States and the District of Columbia that make up the southeastern region of The Salvation Army's geographically divided region of the United States of America. There are 4 Salvation Army territories in the U.S. (See Appendix 1).

Territorial Commander – See Commissioner.

William Booth – Founder of The Salvation Army in 1865, who began his ministry as an itinerant pastor of the Methodist Church in London, England.

ABSTRACT

This thesis-project is an inductive, descriptive study of the work-related stressors of Salvation Army officership that adversely affect the children of officers, and the spiritual practices that can mitigate these effects. The need to be familiar with the spiritual disciplines that officer families can practice at home is integral for helping children grow in their faith. The goal of this study to recognize the most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers.

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM IN ITS SETTING

Introductory Statement

This project will explore the growing need for Salvation Army officers to intentionally present and regularly practice spiritual disciplines in their homes in order to mitigate the negative effects that clergy families inherently experience as a result of work-related stressors. As it is the responsibility of all Christian parents to emphasize the importance of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, Salvation Army officer parents, like all clergy parents, must be aware of the intrinsic dangers that work-related stressors pose to their families and how regularly practicing spiritual disciplines in the home can mitigate the negative effects of clergy family stress.

The Children of Officers

The children of clergy are like most children in many respects; they have hopes, hurts, and needs, of which their parents are responsible for helping them through by offering loving support and encouragement. However, clergy children also grow up in a unique circumstance, which children of non-clergy parents do not equally experience. These unique circumstances include the perception of living in a “glass house” where they feel everyone is watching and judging their every word and action. The children of clergy also grow up with the pressures of sharing their parents with the congregation, which often means putting aside their own needs for the needs of congregants, even when it is most inconvenient for the clergy family.

Salvation Army officers’ children experience the same inherent challenges as children in

other clergy families, including living an itinerant lifestyle in which they experience multiple moves to multiple cities and states throughout their childhood; they experience the feeling of being judged by members of the congregation and the wider community; they experience the overwhelming busyness that is common to having parents who lead a church and also serve as the directors of a large social services organization; and they experience the troubling resentments and emotional dissonance that many children of clergy endure in a family whose faith and livelihood are intertwined.

From August 2000 – June 2002, 48 cadets¹ of The Salvation Army's Crossbearers session² at The College for Officer Training³ in Atlanta, Georgia came together for a two-year residency of Bible and leadership instruction. Within the Crossbearers session, there were 13 single cadets, 1 single cadet with a child, 16 married couples with children, and 1 married couple with no children. All 32 children accompanied their parents during the entire 2-year residency.

While living at The Salvation Army's College for Officer Training, the children of the cadets lived on campus in close quarters to one another. They attended a private Christian school together, went to worship, Sunday school, and children's ministry activities together, and spent personal time with one another any time their parents were away while participating in mandatory ministry practicums on weekends, or during cadet class times on weekdays whenever the children were not in school. This constant togetherness and immersion in a close, Christian

1. "Cadets" are officers in training. This title follows the quasi-military culture of The Salvation Army, created by the Founder of The Salvation Army, General William Booth, in 1865.

2. A "session" is the title given to members of a cohort of a nearly 2-year residency of officers in training, who are given a session name, such as "Crossbearers," and, upon graduation, are ordained and commissioned together.

3. Each of the four territories of The Salvation Army in the United States has its own College for Officer Training. The Southern Territory's College for Officer Training is now called the Evangeline Booth College, and the campus is located at 1032 Metropolitan Pkwy, Atlanta, GA.

atmosphere helped the children to experience a form of Christian living that many children in Christian homes—and even in Christian clergy homes—never experience. Every school day, when the children came home from school, they saw their parents reading their Bibles, studying theology, discussing their ministry, praying with cadet neighbors, and eating dinner with dozens of other committed Christian leaders in the college dining room. On many Sunday mornings, the children of cadets were with their parents, worshipping with children they knew, listening to their parents teach or preach, and sharing a meal with all their campus friends and families after worship. The Christian influences of living as children of Salvation Army cadets at the College for Officer Training were constant and welcomed by all the children, from toddlers to teenagers.

On June 9, 2002, 47 of the 48 members of the Crossbearers session were ordained as pastors and commissioned as officers with the rank of captain. Following the ordination and commissioning ceremonies, the children of the newly ordained and commissioned officers joined their parents for the appointment service⁴. The appointment service served as the most anticipated, and final, event of the two-day graduation at the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre in Atlanta, Georgia and was, like all the graduation events and ceremonies, viewed by thousands of family members, friends, and active and retired Salvation Army officers. During the appointment service, each single cadet was called individually to join the Territorial Commander (TC)⁵ at the center of the stage, where they received their first appointment, verbally from the TC, as newly commissioned Salvation Army officers. Married couples are called together and, if

4. The “appointment service” is a separate ceremony in which each single commissioned officer and married commissioned officers are called by name to the center of the stage to receive their appointments somewhere in the Southern Territory of the United States, which they will move to within the week, following graduation.

5. The Territorial Leader, who holds the rank of “Commissioner,” is The Salvation Army’s highest ranking territorial, executive leader, who holds the authority to place officers within the territory of which he or she is appointed.

they have children, their children join their newly ordained and commissioned officer parents on stage, standing before the TC, where they will hear for the first time where they will be moving to within the following week. The appointment service can be a tense-filled event for everyone, but even more so for the children, depending on their age, their developmental stage, and their emotional maturity, some of which are dreading, and some of which are looking forward to, wherever the Commissioner⁶ tells them they will be living for the next 2-5 years⁷.

Upon the completion of the graduation ceremonies, the newly ordained, commissioned, and appointed officers, along with the children, pack their household items into a moving truck, and within the next few days make the journey to their first appointment. For many of the children of officers, this move will be exciting and adventurous; however, for others, it will be an experience of high anxiety caused by a loss of familiar places and close friends who, like no other children, have a great deal of understanding and empathy for their child-of-officers life. After arriving in their appointment, all 32 of the Crossbearers children were exposed to unfamiliar cities, houses, churches, automobiles, schools, neighbors, and, for some, even weather systems.⁸ So much change can create a spiritual crisis for some children, who find themselves grieving the loss of so much familiarity, and as the years go by, officers and their families are moved again—every 2-5 years on average—which can create further crises in the lives of Salvation Army officers' children. The level of spiritual crisis experienced by the children of

6. The Commissioner is the rank and title held by the Territorial Commander. See previous note for description of a Territorial Commander.

7. Officers and their families can stay in an appointment for less than or more than 2-5 years, but 2-5 years is the expected average for which officers and their families will stay in an appointment.

8. All Salvation Army officers, and their families, are provided with a quarters (the quasi-military term, used by The Salvation Army, to refer to a parsonage), vehicles, furniture, and household goods, all owned by The Salvation Army. When an officer is appointed to a respective appointment, the officers who held the appointment previously, clean and vacate the quarters, the vehicles, and all Salvation Army owned property, where it awaits the arrival of the newly appointed officers and their families.

Salvation Army officers can be greatly exacerbated, or mitigated, by their parents' experience, which includes the opportunity for multiple, work-related, internal and external stressors.

In 2016, the Crossbearers session had served as Salvation Army officers for 14 years. Within the 32 children, who accompanied their parents for 2 years at the College for Officer Training, their levels of spiritual formation are varied from having been ordained and commissioned as officers themselves, to some now claiming to be atheists. Between these two extremes are those who have a healthy faith, those who have nominal faith, those who love Jesus but do not attend any formal ministry or worship, those who claim to believe but are no longer interested in an active Christian life, and those who are bitter agnostics.

Research Project

In this research, a descriptive study is presented with the purpose of discovering the most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers. Using a two-step process, the first step was to develop and disseminate an online survey, which would ascertain data relevant to understanding the stressors associated with Salvation Army officership, the spiritual practices Salvation Army officers regularly practiced with their children at home, and the positive outcomes of regularly practicing spiritual disciplines at home as seen in the positive spiritual formation of their children. The second step was to utilize the data gained from the online survey to provide the leaders of The Salvation Army's Southern Territory with practical tools for helping Salvation Army officer parents present and regularly practice spiritual disciplines at home, so that, with the power of the Holy Spirit, officer parents could be equipped to more effectively facilitate spiritual maturity in their children. This research will include a Biblical/Theological Framework, a Literature Review, an online survey instrument, Research Findings, and a Reflection and Analysis with Recommendations.

Driving Assumptions

Children of clergy share common challenges that are also experienced by the children of Salvation Army officers. Additionally, the children of Salvation Army officers also share common challenges, regardless of the session to which their parents belong. Like other children of Salvation Army officers, the 32 children of the Crossbearers session have experienced the internal and external stressors of their parents' officership. Therefore, there are some assumptions that are guiding this research. The first assumption is that officers, who do not present and practice spiritual disciplines at home, with and without their children, are more likely to see less spiritual development in their children. The second assumption is that the internal and external, work-related stressors that are experienced by Salvation Army officers influence the vitality of their own spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of their children. The final assumption is that officers, regardless of the work-related stressors that all officers experience, who emphasize consistent spiritual disciplines in the home, are more likely to see their children grow into spiritually mature adults. As Smith and Denton suggest, ". . . even basic practices like regular Bible reading and personal prayer seem clearly associated with stronger and deeper faith commitment among youth."⁹ Therefore, this study will seek to recognize effective spiritual disciplines that officer parents can present in their homes and practice with their children, which will enable them to better facilitate spiritual maturity in their children.

9. Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 269.

Thesis Statement

Salvation Army officers serve as clergy whose ministry includes direct service to the neediest and most hurting individuals and families in their respective communities. Therefore, work-related stressors that officers experience daily can sometimes impose negative effects on their families, including their children. The adverse effects of officer parents' internal and external, work-related stressors can be seen in the number of officers' children whose faith is nominal or rejected, and in the shrinking number of officers' children who become Salvation Army officers themselves. The Salvation Army provides several ministry opportunities and help services for officers' children, which can be, and have been, effective in providing spiritual formation opportunities. However, because there are children whose faith is less than generative and children whose faith has been rejected, The Salvation Army could benefit from recognizing officer responsibilities that are most likely to adversely affect the spiritual health of officers' children, and the spiritual disciplines that, when regularly practiced in the home, are most likely to benefit the spiritual health of officers' children. Simply stated, the intention of this study is to identify the most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers.

Research Questions

- What are the primary work-related stressors that negatively affect Salvation Army officers and their families?
- Which internal and external work-related stressors negatively affect the facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of officers' children?
- Which spiritual disciplines, when practiced in the home of Salvation Army officer parents, will best equip Salvation Army officers, regardless of the associated stressors, to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children?

Salvation Army Provisions for Officer Children's Spiritual Formation

Formal Programs¹⁰

Dedication

Upon the birth of Salvation Army officer children, the officer parents are provided with the opportunity to formally dedicate their child to Christ. This ceremony includes an emphasis on the parents' willingness to raise the child according to Christian principles and to prepare the child for Christian service. Therefore, the dedication ceremony is not only a dedication of the child but is also a dedication of the parents to raise their child as Christians. Because the dedication service is one in which the parents are held accountable to raising their child in accordance with Christian beliefs and behaviors, the ceremony of an officer's child is typically presented by another officer, who presents the formal ceremony and challenges to the officer parents of the child being dedicated, including the following promise and challenge:

10. All formal programs provided for the spiritual formation of children are open to non-officers as well.

In the dedication of this child you desire to give him/her fully to God. You wish to thank God for entrusting this precious life into your hands, and you want him/her to be nurtured in all that is pure, lovely and honest. To this end you promise that you will keep from him/her, so far as you are able, everything which is likely to harm him/her in body, mind or spirit.¹¹

You also promise that, as he/she grows in wisdom and stature, you will teach him/her the truths of the gospel, encourage him/her to seek Christ as Saviour, and support him/her in the commitment of his/her life to the service of God. You must be to him/her an example of a true Christian.¹²

As with any other member¹³, or non-member, of The Salvation Army, officers are challenged to make the spiritual life of their children a matter of priority.

Junior Soldier

Another formal method presented by The Salvation Army for facilitating the spiritual maturity of officers' children is enrollment of the child into to the rank of a Junior Soldier¹⁴. At age 7, an officer's child can be enrolled as a Junior Soldier, which is presented with a formal prayer ceremony and followed by the child's signed and dated "The Salvation Army Junior Soldier My Promise" certificate, which states,

I know that Jesus is my Saviour from sin. I have asked Him to forgive my sins, and I will trust Him to keep me good. By His help, I will be His loving and obedient child, and will help others to follow Him. I promise to pray, to read my Bible, and to lead a life that is clean in thought, word and deed. I will not use anything that may injure my body or my mind, including harmful drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.

As a Junior Soldier, the child is considered a full member of The Salvation Army and is expected to grow and mature into a dedicated follower of Christ.

11. The Salvation Army, *Salvation Army Ceremonies* (London: International Headquarters, 1886), 10.

12. The Salvation Army, *Ceremonies*, 11.

13. Members of The Salvation Army are called "soldiers," which is in keeping with the quasi-military culture of The Salvation Army denomination. There are also members of The Salvation Army called "adherents," who are those people who want to be members, but are unable to give up certain vices, including use of tobacco and alcohol.

14. See glossary for definition.

Corps Cadet¹⁵

When the officers' child reaches the age of 13, the officer can enroll the child into The Salvation Army's 5-year Corps Cadet program, which requires active participation in Corps Cadet meetings, formal studies of the Bible, Salvation Army doctrines, and Salvation Army history, as well as the timely turning in of written assignments and active participation in Salvation Army ministries. Upon the completion of the five-year Corps Cadet program, the students are recognized in a formal graduation ceremony in the presence of their respective Salvation Army corps members and given a certificate of graduation, which includes a \$5,000 scholarship to use when they graduate High school and begin attending college.

Senior Soldier¹⁶

The children of Salvation Army officers, beginning at the age of 13, who desire to commit themselves to The Salvation Army as teen or adult members, can be enrolled as senior soldiers. After an in-depth Salvation Army doctrine and history study, provided by the corps officer¹⁷ or another leader of the corps¹⁸, the child of an officer can make a covenant to serve as a Salvation Army soldier. This commitment includes the presentation of a signed covenantal document, called, "Articles of War (A Soldier's Covenant)," in which the teenage or adult child commits to believe and keep the doctrines of The Salvation Army. Following the presentation of the signed "Articles of War," the teenage or adult child then participates in a formal ceremony in the presence of the corps, in which the corps officer, or another Salvation Army officer or leader,

15. See glossary for definition.

16. See glossary for definition.

17. "Corps Officer" is the quasi-military title used to refer to an ordained pastor of The Salvation Army.

18. "Corps" is the quasi-military title used by The Salvation Army to refer to a Salvation Army church or congregation.

presents “The Swearing-In of Soldiers” ceremony. In order to be sworn in as a senior soldier, the candidate must have professed salvation through faith in Christ and acknowledge Christ as savior, must have studied the doctrines, principles and evangelistic witness of The Salvation Army, must have been accepted by the senior census board, and must have signed the articles of war.¹⁹ Senior soldiers are expected to live Christian lives to the best of their ability, in private and in public; they are expected to train for, and participate in, an active ministry; they are expected to tithe to their corps; and they are expected to seek to grow daily in their Christian faith.

Congregational Ministries

Just like most Evangelical denominations, The Salvation Army provides Sunday school, worship, and weekly Bible studies and youth activities in which Salvation Army officers’ children attend regularly. These are also formal opportunities that children of officers can participate in and experience as means of grace, which the Holy Spirit can use to form their spiritual lives.

With all these formal opportunities, The Salvation Army provides many occasions to catechize those who follow Jesus in The Salvation Army. However, such commitments, for some people in The Salvation Army, like some people in all Christian denominations, are sometimes public formalities without spiritual realities. It should also be remembered that, as Marjorie Thompson succinctly states, “. . . spiritual formation involves far more than what has typically been meant by catechesis or Christian education. It becomes increasingly clear how central the role of significant adults within the home is to this kind of formation.”²⁰

19. The Salvation Army, *Ceremonies*, 2-3.

Other Formative Ministries for Children of Officers

Other Churches

A major challenge for many Salvation Army officer families is a lack of leadership in small corps. In this situation, many officer parents find themselves not only serving as their children's parents but also as their children's pastors, Sunday school teachers, Bible study facilitators, and youth program leaders. Some officers, who find that their children do not respond well to their parents serving as their pastors, will encourage their children to participate in the youth ministries, and sometimes worship, of another denomination or non-denominational church in their area. This is evidenced by one officer, who stated in the online survey instrument developed for this research,

Sometimes I feel bad that my children didn't have the opportunity to attend a church with a wonderful youth ministry, and many times were the only ones their age at The Army. It didn't necessarily hamper their spiritual lives, but I do know that my daughter attended another church's youth group for several months before our recent move, and she grew spiritually . . . started reading her Bible every night, etc.²¹

Camp

The Salvation Army owns campgrounds that are strategically located in every Salvation Army Division²². The Salvation Army campgrounds host multiple camps per year, including boys camp, girls camp, teen camp, conservatory (music instruction), etc., in which children spend one to five weeks learning Bible lessons, participating in character building skills,

20. Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, rev. and expanded ed., (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1996), 112.

21. Anonymous comment from Salvation Army officer in online survey.

22. A Salvation Army "Division" includes a state, or multiple states, within a Territory that are considered somewhat autonomous from the other Divisions. Each Division has its own Divisional Staff, including a Divisional Commander, A General Secretary, a Divisional Secretary, a Divisional Finance Secretary, and a Divisional Youth Secretary, all of which have their own team of employed staff. The Divisional officer staff are the senior executive officers for their respective Division.

worshipping, and doing outdoor activities. Like other denominations, camp is a primary evangelical tool of The Salvation Army, which gives children the opportunity to find and grow in Christ.

Research Project Comments

Biblical / Theological Framework

Looking to Jesus as a parental example of one who disciplined his followers amidst many troubles and difficulties, the leadership of Jesus is a realistic and helpful example for Salvation Army officer parents, who seek to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, even when the stress of work and life are at their peak. Jesus exemplified the provision of communal practices in which his closest followers were invited to participate and, when appropriated, allowed Jesus' disciples to experience grace and spiritual growth, not only at the synagogue and at the temple but also in intimate and secluded settings, such as when they were alone together in a field, a garden, or a home. Throughout Jesus' interaction with his disciples, the Scriptures reveal a parental aspect to his rabbinic leadership style, which is clearly pertinent to this study. As their teacher, Jesus served as a model of spiritual parenting. Jesus cared, and provided, for his closest disciples just like a loving parent who desired their faithfulness to God above all else. The goal of this research was to recognize the ways in which Jesus' spiritual leadership with his disciples could be exemplified and practiced by Salvation Army officer parents as an observable, effective, duplicatable model for facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. When Salvation Army officers, despite the stressors associated with serving as clergy members, regularly practice and provide opportunities for their children to participate in and practice spiritual disciplines at home, they are obeying God's command for parents to teach their children and help them grow in their Christian faith. They are also imitating an invaluable discipling

method of Jesus. By imitating Jesus' emphasis on practicing spiritual disciplines with his disciples as a parental leader, Salvation Army officers will be better equipped to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their own children.

To develop this study, Kenda Dean's presentation of "4 Cultural Tools" was used to sort the categories of spiritual practices modeled by Jesus' rabbinic ministry methods as seen in his teaching methods throughout the Gospels. Dr. Dean is an ordained United Methodist pastor and the Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church, and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. In her book, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, Dean, referring to the "cultural toolkit" theory of Sociologist Ann Swidler,²³ categorizes the 4 spiritual practices that are used by highly devoted Christian teenagers. These "4 Cultural Tools" include "claiming a creed," "belonging to a community," "pursuing a call," and "confessing confidence."²⁴

Review of Literature

This area of research included the review of previous research on the topic of internal and external stressors that are inherent within clergy families, and the topic of spiritual disciplines practiced in the home that can mitigate the negative effects of work-related stressors in clergy families. The number of books published on the topic of work-related stressors that effect clergy children was slim; however, there were a great deal of scholarly journal articles and doctoral dissertations that were found to be insightful, helpful, and invaluable to this study, including publications in the *Journal of Religious Research*, the *Journal of Pastoral Psychology*, and the

23. Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies," *American Sociological Review* 51 (April 1986): 273-286.

24. Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2010), 69-78. For the purposes of this research, the author has changed the titles of the original categories, "pursuing a purpose," and "harboring hope" to the categories "pursuing a call" and "confessing confidence," in order to retain continuity of the language.

Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care. Other relevant and important authors whose published works provided pertinent contributions to this study included George Barna, Os Guinness, Paul Tripp, Michael Horton, Christian Smith, and Timothy Laniak. Furthermore, some of the books that proved invaluable to understanding the spiritual needs of children included Christian Smith and Melinda Denton's *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, Marjorie Thompson's *Family: The Forming Center*, and Kenda Dean's *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. Additional insights from the Literature Review involved scholarly research on the topic of family resilience, from authors such as John DeFrain and Sylvia Asay as well as studies on faith development theory from the writings of James Fowler.

The external and internal stressors associated with clergy families are multifaceted and can be influenced by psychological characteristics such as emotional intelligence and parenting style, which can serve to complicate, or mitigate, the adverse effects that children of clergy experience, and can influence the outcomes of a child's spiritual formation in the clergy family home. Salvation Army officers' children are as susceptible to the negative effects of work-related stressors as the children of clergy in other Christian denominations.

Research Methodology

The research instrument developed to collect quantitative and qualitative data in order to identify the least and most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers was an online survey. With active support from The Salvation Army's Personnel Department of the Southern Territory in Atlanta, Georgia, the online survey was developed, using SurveyMonkey software. After receiving approval from The Salvation Army's Southern Territorial Executive Council and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Gordon-

Conwell Theological Seminary, the online survey was disseminated by The Salvation Army's Personnel Department in Atlanta, GA, via The Salvation Army's email software, to every active and retired officer, and to 4 former officers, in the Southern Territory (940 active, 556 retired, and 4 former).

Findings

In this chapter of the research, the raw data that was collected from the online survey results was calculated so that conclusions could be drawn from the quantitative and qualitative statistics after viewing the correlations, commonalities, and differences related to the specific categories, such as demographics, Likert scale ratings, closed-ended questions, and comments from the open-ended questions. The data was also compared with the results of information found in previous studies that resulted from the Literature Review to see if the experiences of this study's survey participants showed any correlation with those of other clergy family studies.

The findings show evidence for a correlation between the positive development of spiritual formation in the children of those who regularly participate in spiritual practices at home. As Marjorie Thompson asserts, "The family, more than any other context of life, is the foundational place of spiritual formation in its broad sense, especially for children."²⁵ There is also evidence that many Christian families are not practicing spiritual disciplines at home for a number of reasons. There is some suspicion, which resulted from the online survey responses, that there are Salvation Army officers who do not regularly practice spiritual disciplines in the home. This can be a result of overwhelming schedules, as stated by some of the survey participants:

25. Thompson, *Family*, 22.

- Always at church. Not a lot of downtime.
- Sometimes the busyness and demands of our schedules don't allow for adequate family time.²⁶

Analyzing the raw data from the survey by looking at the difference between male and female officers showed some surprisingly consistent outcomes. The most notable was the rating levels of male and female officers that showed no statistically significant differences regarding their agreement and disagreement about the negative effects that their vocation has on their children.

Another interesting outcome from calculating the results of the survey was that only officers 56 years old and over were included among those whose responses showed evidence of motivated cognition and “blaming the victim.”

Additional findings showed that some officers, whose responses revealed a high level of disappointment over the adverse effects that their officership has had on their children, may have inadvertently revealed a low level of emotional maturity, which makes them less flexible and adaptable; therefore, they are also easily stressed to the point of dysfunctional behavior.

As has been found by previous research, regarding clergy families in other denominations, the online survey results collected and calibrated for this study show that officer families have similar work-related stressors, of which the Top 3 mentioned were “busyness,” “travel,” and “moving.” The surprising outcome here was that “moving” was the third highest, though it was hypothesized that “moving” would be first among Salvation Army officers.

26. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officer in online survey.

Analysis and Recommendations

This portion of the dissertation was developed by utilizing the “cultural toolkit” theory of sociologist Ann Swidler²⁷ as it is presented in the form of a discipleship method that was developed by Kenda Dean, in her book, *Almost Christian*. Kenda Dean’s presentation of the 4 cultural tools, which research has shown are used by highly devoted, Christian young people,²⁸ is integrated with the overall research of this study to present a practical tool that can be used by Salvation Army officer parents as a means of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. These 4 cultural tools, which are “the symbols, stories, rituals, relationships, and worldviews” that influence our construction of understanding and behavior in the world,²⁹ are the communal practices of “claiming a creed,” “belonging to a community,” “pursuing a call,” and “confessing confidence.”

As a result of this research, including the wealth of knowledge discovered through the Biblical and Theological Framework, the helpful insights offered by the previous work of researchers in the Literature Review, and the outcomes of Salvation Army officers’ input from the online survey, the final portion of this research resulted in an outline manual of the 4 cultural tools and a webinar of six, short videos³⁰, that can be viewed and utilized by Salvation Army officers to disciple their children at home. The suggestions made in the outline and webinar provide ideas for how each of the 4 cultural tools can be practically presented and practiced by Salvation Army officer parents; however, these suggestions are by no means exhaustive. Each

27. Ann Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies,” *American Sociological Review* 51 (April 1986): 273.

28. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

29. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 48.

30. The webinar can be seen on the YouTube channel titled “Spiritual Formation of TSA Officer Families,” <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcLVP73eLF6NkVPE8pvuIqQ>.

officer family will need to prayerfully consider how to present these tools based on the age and maturity of the children. The outline and the webinar also end with helpful recommendations to consider before and during the presentation and practice of these spiritual disciplines, which include the reminder of how important it is that parents themselves genuinely and actively model these disciplines in the home, and the reminder that there is no guarantee that practicing spiritual disciplines will ensure spiritually mature children. Only the active participation of the Holy Spirit can transform spiritual practices into means of grace that are used to form children into images of Christ.³¹ However, practicing spiritual disciplines with one's children at home can pave the way, with the Holy Spirit's power, for generative faith.

Conclusion

Jesus was a model of excellent parenting. His leadership as a first century Jewish rabbi included the parental methods of loving, disciplining, and teaching his disciples faithfully, intentionally, and with his eye on their eternity. Most importantly, Jesus faithfully and intentionally modeled the practice of spiritual disciplines, such as prayer, generosity, and worship, etc., in the sight of his followers. It is Jesus, who Salvation Army officers are to mimic as they facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children at home and elsewhere. Starting with the example of Jesus as a parental disciple-maker, the purpose of this research was to gather, analyze, and utilize the insights and information afforded by each portion of the study as a means of providing a helpful tool for Salvation Army officers to use as a means of raising their children in the will and ways of Christ.

This chapter serves as the introduction to the purpose and goals of this thesis-project. As the research required of each chapter was developed, the study explored the correlation between

31. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 60.

the external and internal, work-related stressors that are associated with the pastoral vocation and how those stressors not only adversely affect the clergy themselves but how the effects of those work-related stressors on clergy parents subsequently affect the children of clergy. This study was pursued in order to develop a helpful tool that Salvation Army officers can use to facilitate spiritual discipline in the lives of their children, despite the adverse effects of work-related stressors. Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological framework of how Jesus modeled parental leadership in his role as a rabbinic leader among his closest disciples. In Chapter 3, the scholarly studies of previous researchers, whose work is related, and contributes, to this study is provided. In Chapter 4, the research instrument, including the design of the online survey, is described and presented. In Chapter 5, the results of the online survey instrument are analyzed and shared. And, finally, in Chapter 6, the results of the thesis-project are presented in the form of an outline manual of the 4 cultural tools and a webinar that can be used by Salvation Army officer parents for the facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL / THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this chapter, a theological framework for Jesus' facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of his disciples will be presented. Jesus' primary concern was equipping his disciples with the tools that would enable them to develop generative faith¹—faith that bears fruit.² Using various means of grace³ to address this concern, Jesus provided opportunities for his disciples to increasingly develop the godly character required of God's children. This chapter examines Jesus' methods of teaching God's instructions for how to live a godly life to his disciples, which exemplified obedience to God's commands for parents to teach God's commandments to their children, i.e., "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children."⁴

As the Living Word⁵, included in Jesus' role as a first century Jewish rabbi, is that of a parental leader, which serves as a model to be imitated by parents of all generations to facilitate opportunities for developing ongoing spiritual formation.

1. Kenda Dean explains mature faith as "faith that is so infused with desire for God and love for others that it becomes generative." Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2010), 23.

2. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 81.

3. John Wesley referred to "means of grace" as the variety of Christian practices, which are used by the Holy Spirit to work in human hearts. These "means of grace," Wesley said, were available to all, including non-Christians, and participation was expected by God. Although the "means of grace" have no salvific value, Wesley believed that non-Christians who participated in the means could be drawn to salvation in Christ. (Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, *Spiritual Formation: a Wesleyan Paradigm* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2011), 74.)

4. Deut 6:6-7a NIV.

5. John 1:1-14.

Jesus, The Incarnate Christ

As the Word made flesh,⁶ Jesus the incarnate Christ impresses the commandments of God on God's children (i.e., the disciples of Jesus) by providing reliable, communal practices in which his followers can participate, along with exposing them to his personal, flawless obedience to God's teachings as the one who is "the truth."⁷ Jesus is the Word, God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, who has come to impress upon his children the command to, as Morris puts it, "... 'do' the truth."⁸ The commandments that are to be impressed upon God's children are encapsulated by Jesus in two commands that include a portion of the Shema⁹ and Leviticus 19:18¹⁰, which emphasize love for God and others:

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."¹¹

Jesus, The Parental Leader

Jesus' facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of his disciples is an effective model for Christian leaders to imitate and utilize in facilitating spiritual growth and maturity in the lives of their own children. Dean, referring to the research and results of the National Study of Youth

6. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14 NIV).

7. John 14:6.

8. Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K., 1995), 95.

9. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Dt 6:4-5 NIV)

10. "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. (Lev 19:18 NIV)

11. Matt 22:36-40 NIV.

and Religion¹², says it is common for highly devoted Christian youth to describe the power of God as “parental discipline”, which they understand to be “a justified form of judgment because it is motivated by parental care. . . . In contrast to the ‘divine butler/cosmic therapist’ views of God that dominated the NSYR interviews, the parent-like God-images of highly devoted Christian teenagers are significant.”¹³

As will be presented, Jesus’ rabbinic leadership style is characteristically parental. Bivin attests to this, writing:

Despite the many hardships, there was nothing to compare with the exhilaration of following and learning from a great rabbi and being in the circle of his disciples. A special relationship developed between rabbi and disciple in which the rabbi became like a father.¹⁴

Citing Babylonian Talmud, Erubin 73a,¹⁵ the editors of *The Jewish People in the First Century, Volume 2* liken the relationship of the first century Jewish sage and his disciples to brothers who share their estates, or “a father and his son.”¹⁶

As their rabbi, Jesus looks after his disciples just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, not scattering and abandoning those that are lost like the shepherds who cared only for themselves

12. The National Study of Youth and Religion is a research project led by Dr. Christian Smith, Sociology Professor at the University of Notre Dame and Lisa Pearce, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The research of the NSYR is recorded in the book by Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2005).

13. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 71.

14. David Bivin, *New Light On the Difficult Words of Jesus* (Holland, MI: En-Gedi Resource Center, Inc., 2005), 19.

15. S. Safrai et al., eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, vol. 2 (1976; repr., Philadelphia: Van Gorcum, Assen / Maastricht Fortress Press, 1987), 964n4.

16. Safrai et al., *The Jewish People*, 964.

and have abandoned the sheep,¹⁷ but as the faithful Shepherd, who searches for, rescues, and cares for the sheep.¹⁸ As their shepherd, Jesus is the incarnated presence of the Everlasting Father,¹⁹ who promises not to leave his disciples as orphans.²⁰ Referencing this promise of Jesus, Tenney notes, “Jesus looked upon them as spiritual children (13:33)²¹ who need the strong protection and guidance of a parent in order to survive.”²² Furthermore, although, as Ladd notes, “. . . Jesus constantly distinguishes himself from the Father . . .”²³, Jesus also claims to be the absolute representative of the Father, doing only what the Father does²⁴ and speaking only what the Father says.²⁵

Communal Practices of Discipleship

It is the parental characteristic of Jesus’ leadership style, as a first century Jewish rabbi, that serves as the backdrop for this study as the author introduces Jesus’ invitations for his first twelve disciples to participate in four communal practices (cultural tools), which are opportunities provided by Jesus as means of grace that have the ability to facilitate spiritual

17. Ezek 34:1-6.

18. Ezek 34:11-16a.

19. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isa 9:6 NIV)

20. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:18 NIV)

21. Adding further evidence for the parental characteristics of Jesus’ rabbinic leadership among his disciples, Tenney alludes here to John 13:33, in which Jesus addresses his disciples as “My children.” Merrill C. Tenney, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with The New International Version of The Holy Bible, (John – Acts)* Volume 9, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 147.

22. Tenney, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (John – Acts), 147.

23. George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of The New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 287.

24. See John 5:19-20.

25. See John 14:10, 24; 17:8.

growth and maturity within the Messianic community of Jesus, and specifically for this research, within the lives of his first twelve followers.

In this study, the headings of the four cultural tools used by Jesus to facilitate spiritual formation in the lives of his disciples are borrowed from Dr. Kenda Dean's²⁶ research, as mentioned in her book *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. Referring to sociologist Ann Swidler's "cultural toolkit" theory²⁷, Dean recognizes four cultural tools, that is, communal practices, that appear to be skillfully used by those the researchers of the National Study of Youth and Religion categorized as highly devoted young people.²⁸ The worldviews and everyday behaviors of humans are determined by cultural default settings unless they are overridden, Dean says.²⁹ Swidler argues that the cultural toolkit consists of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems."³⁰ Dean further notes that Swidler's "cultural toolkit theory offers one explanation for why patterns of behavior in communities persist over long periods of time."³¹ Dean also shares that these same cultural tools are regularly employed

26. Dr. Dean is an ordained United Methodist pastor, and the Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church, and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. She worked on the National Study of Youth and Religion and she has authored several books, including *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Trending in Youth Ministry* and *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church*. She is a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary, and she received her PhD from Princeton Seminary.

27. Swidler, "Culture in Action," 273.

28. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

29. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 47.

30. Swidler, "Culture in Action," 273.

31. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 48.

by Christian communities “in order to imitate Christ, believing that the Holy Spirit’s presence in human communities can alter these human tools into vehicles of grace and transformation.”³²

The four cultural tools that highly devoted young people use adeptly, identifying them as members of their faith traditions, are 1) claiming a creed (i.e., they confess their tradition’s God-story); 2) belonging to a community (i.e., they belong to a community that enacts the God-story); 3) pursuing a purpose (i.e., they feel called by this story to contribute to a larger purpose); and 4) harboring hope (i.e., they have hope for the future promised by this story).³³ For the purposes of this research, the titles of the original categories, “pursuing a purpose,” and “harboring hope,” have been changed in order to retain continuity of the language. Therefore, the titles, “pursuing a call” and “confessing confidence” will be used in their place. Affirming the need for spiritual disciplines, Kinnaman and Matlock, recommend five practices that help to develop resilient faith, i.e., experience intimacy with Jesus, develop the muscles of cultural discernment, forge meaningful, intergenerational relationships, train for vocational discipleship, and engage in countercultural mission,³⁴ which are recognized as encompassed within, and can be accomplished by, the four cultural tools recommended by Dean.

Dean is convinced that these four cultural tools are communal activities that can provide support beams for consequential faith.³⁵ In other words, they are practices, which “stake up young faith” by exposing young believers to Christ.³⁶ For those who appropriately respond, these

32. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 50.

33. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 70-8.

34. David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock, *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019), 34.

35. Kinnaman and Matlock, *Faith for Exiles*, 62.

36. Kinnaman and Matlock, *Faith for Exiles*, 63.

four cultural tools serve as means of grace that can provide young believers with opportunities to become spiritually mature followers of Jesus. Dean clarifies:

In Christian tradition, a creed, community, call, and hope are not just tools we pick up along the way because people like us use them. They are tools God uses to enter the world, and to enter us—resulting in a very different imagination than the one Moralistic Therapeutic Deism³⁷ assumes.³⁸

Spiritual formation, though only possible through the grace and active presence of God's Holy Spirit, requires human appropriation of the spiritual practices provided by God as discipling activities. As means of grace, these four cultural tools offer consistent opportunities for believers to increasingly develop the character of Christ that every disciple is called to obtain.³⁹ Gordon Smith writes, "The image of spiritual growth toward maturity suggests the idea of progress in the faith; spiritual maturity does not come quickly but 'grows.'"⁴⁰ Smith continues, "A wise person, a person who is mature in Christ, is one who through particular practices associated with the Scriptures has come to a theological vision of life, work and relationships. He or she has a Christian mind."⁴¹

37. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is defined by Christians Smith as "the de facto dominant religion among contemporary U.S. teenagers," which has as its core components a moralistic approach to life, which teaches that being a good, moral person is central to a happy life; feeling good, happy, secure, and at peace is most important, and God created the world, but is not involved with human affairs unless we want God involved to help us with a problem. (Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162-4)

38. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 60.

39. Eph 4:11-13.

40. Gordon T. Smith, *Called to Be Saints: An Invitation to Christian Maturity* (Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP Academic, 2014), 20.

41. Smith, *Called to Be Saints*, 74.

Cultural Tools

Claiming a Creed

We will begin by exploring the practice of Claiming a Creed as one of the four cultural tools that Jesus employed to facilitate spiritual growth and maturity in the lives of his disciples. Dean describes creeds as the formally summarized, unabashedly personal, articulated beliefs of highly devoted Christian teenagers, who “describe God as being personally concerned for them and powerfully involved with them.”⁴² As an articulated form of Christian understanding, “a creed is a summary statement of Christian faith and belief.”⁴³ As a cultural tool, claiming a creed means articulating the answer to the question of why Jesus is worth following;⁴⁴ it is the God-story that “emphasizes a God so smitten with creation that God chooses to enter creation with us, and stops at nothing—not even death—to win us back.”⁴⁵

Biblical Theology of Claiming a Creed

Defined as “a summary statement of Christian faith and belief,”⁴⁶ the earliest creeds were used ecumenically as a means of presenting Christian doctrine in summarized form for candidates of baptism, and they later became tools for instructing converts, for combating heresies, and for liturgical use in corporate worship.⁴⁷ Kenda Dean defines a creed as an informal or formal claim regarding God’s worthiness to be followed—the creed that is claimed is one in

42. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 70.

43. Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, & Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 1999), 33.

44. William Placher, “Why Creeds Matter,” *Christian Century* (September 20, 2003), 23. Quoted in Dean, *Almost Christian*, 70.

45. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 60.

46. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 33.

47. Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary*, 33.

which God is personally concerned for and powerfully involved in the lives of those who follow him.⁴⁸ This theological importance for, and encouraging power of, creeds is seen in the preamble and prologue of the Sinai covenant:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."⁴⁹

Although, Joshua's response to the people's articulated commitment is to remind those about to enter the Promised Land that they will be unable to keep their creedal promise, their response to Joshua serves as a good example of claiming a creed that imparts their trust in God's personal concern for and involvement with his people:

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."⁵⁰

As a reminder to Israel, God instructs his people to learn and remember the covenant they have made with God,⁵¹ and they are also to impress the covenant on their children, who are to learn and remember why they follow and obey God, who brought their ancestors out of slavery and brought them to the Promised Land.

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you-- a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant-- then when you eat and are

48. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 70.

49. Exod 20:2 NIV.

50. Josh 24:16-18

51. Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them (Deut 5:1 NIV).

satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.⁵²

Placing God's commandments on their hearts means the people of the covenant were to utilize the commandments of the covenant as a framework for expressing their love to God, and their obedience to the commandments would be "based on understanding" and "not a matter of formal legalism."⁵³

The creed claimed by Israel, which is to be a parental response to their descendants, who ask for the purpose of the covenantal instructions they are taught to keep between themselves and God, is seen in God's commandment to instruct posterity:

In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the LORD sent signs and wonders-- great and terrible-- on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."⁵⁴

Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh is viewed by Israel as praiseworthy because of the "irrefutable power and passionate care"⁵⁵ he displayed on behalf of his people.⁵⁶

The New Testament also provides theological support for claiming a creed based on Jesus' worthiness to be followed. The followers of Jesus are those who "insist that the God who

52. Deut 6:6-13 NIV.

53. Peter C. Craigie, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Deuteronomy*, ed. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 170.

54. Deut 6:20-25 NIV.

55. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 71.

56. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 71.

willingly shared our humanity in Jesus Christ is the same God who vanquishes sin and death.”⁵⁷

It is in John’s Gospel, following the discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus, that John articulates why Jesus has been sent into the world, explaining his mission as salvific:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.⁵⁸

Jesus’ mission is grounded in and “was itself the consequence of God’s love.”⁵⁹ The followers of Jesus were those who came to believe that he was worthy of following because he has the genuine desire to save them and he has the irrefutable power to save them.⁶⁰ Jesus’ followers are not driven to obey and follow him because they have “a warm personal relationship with him,” but because having a relationship with him is consequential to life.⁶¹ This credal claim is articulated clearly by Peter in his Spirit-filled defense of healing a lame man, when, even at the risk of prosecution by the Jewish authorities for John and himself, he said,

Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."⁶²

Finally, just before his ascension, Jesus gives a command to his followers that will require their total devotion and dedication in following him. It is this commandment, known as the Great Commission, that includes the promise of Christ’s continual, powerful, and personal

57. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 72.

58. John 3:16-17 NIV.

59. Carson, D. A., ed., *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U. K., 1991), 204.

60. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 72.

61. William C. Placher, “Believe it or not,” *The Christian Century* 120, no. 19 (Sep 20, 2003): 21.

62. Acts 4:11-12 NIV.

participation in the lives of his faithful disciples, whereby he ensures them of his eternal worthiness and companionship:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."⁶³

For those who would become his faithful followers, obedient to his instructions of discipling all nations, their belief in Jesus' claim to have all authority under heaven and earth and his promise to be with them until the end of the age would serve as the formula for a creed worthy of remembering, teaching, and obeying, which would inspire their faithfulness, even unto death.

Jesus' Invitation

Throughout their time with Jesus, the disciples were developing a catechistic⁶⁴ understanding of why they should follow, trust, and obey Jesus. Jesus' close relationship with his disciples provides opportunities for them to determine whether he is a leader worthy of their trust. Therefore, throughout his time with them, Jesus provides opportunities for his disciples to develop and articulate their trust in him as the world's Messiah. One such occasion is found in all three of the synoptic Gospels.⁶⁵ It is during the time when Jesus is with his disciples in Caesarea Philippi that he offers them an invitation to claim the creed of Jesus' trinitarian sonship by first asking them to share with him:

63. Matt 28:18-20 NIV.

64. Catechesis is a process, using a question-and-answer format in which the teachings of basic Christian beliefs and Scriptural content are imparted to children raised in the church and new converts (Grenz, Guretzki, & Nordling, Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms, 24).

65. See Matt 16:13-20, Mk 8:27-29, and Luke 9:18-21.

"Who do people say that I am?"⁶⁶

After the disciples reveal what they have heard, regarding the various identities attributed to Jesus by others,⁶⁷ Jesus asks them directly:

"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"⁶⁸

The answer to this question is determined by the disciples' connection and participation with the Spirit of God, which Jesus will affirm,⁶⁹ following Peter's Spirit-given response.

The Disciples' Appropriation

Though he—and all the disciples—will need continuing opportunities to unflinchingly own and confidently live according to the creed they claim, Peter's response to Jesus' creedal invitation in this passage reveals his growing understanding of Jesus' messianic, trinitarian position:

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."⁷⁰

It is the extended form of Peter's confession, which is found in Matthew's gospel, that is most revealing of Peter's Spirit-given insights about Jesus' identity:

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."⁷¹

66. Mark 8:27b New American Standard Bible 1995 (NAU).

67. They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." (Mark 8:28 NIV)

68. Mark 8:29 NIV.

69. Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. (Matt 16:17 NIV)

70. Mark 8:29b NIV.

71. Matt 16:16 NIV.

Linking the expanded confession of Peter in Matthew 16:16 to the disciples' confession in Matthew 14:33⁷², Noland notes that it is Peter himself who vocally attributes the title to Jesus at Caesarea Philippi,⁷³ stating:

Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ is of a Christ who is to be worshipped as one in whom God is immediately encountered. . . . To refer to God as the 'living God' is to point to him as one to be reckoned with, who has all the powers of deity to bring to bear on the situation.⁷⁴

Their faith in following Jesus was strengthened by their developing recognition and vocal confession that his leadership was motivated by the divine love and power of a caring provider.⁷⁵ Articulating a creed is not in and of itself enough to influence moral behavior or consequential faith; rather, it is their faith in Jesus' love and authority (i.e., their faith that he is dependable and responsive⁷⁶)—their belief that Jesus wants to save them and that Jesus can save them⁷⁷—that enables his disciples to follow him,⁷⁸ that is, as Laniak notes, “to become extensions of his own

72. And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!" (NAU)

73. “It may be more than fortuitous that in Mt. 14:33 ‘those in the boat’ (so: not immediately including Peter?) make the confession, while in 16:16 Peter makes the confession.” John Noland, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, UK, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 665n328.

74. Noland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 665.

75. Dean explains that highly devoted Christian youth “commonly describe God's power as parental discipline, a justified form of judgment because it is motivated by parental care.” Dean, *Almost Christian*, 71.

76. Rodney Stark, *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 20-22.

77. “In Christian theology, (a) God wants to save us, and (b) God can save us (though the word ‘save’ may carry a number of theological accents, from healing to rescue to existential transformation).” Stark, *One True God*, 72.

78. Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 376. Rodney Stark, *Exploring the Religious Life* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004). Rodney Stark, *One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 20-23, 28. Quoted in Dean, *Almost Christian*, 71-2.

ministry, full participants in his mission,”⁷⁹ which includes being sent out like sheep among wolves.⁸⁰

When parents readily articulate faith by means of their Christian creed, they are giving their children opportunities to articulate faith in Christ, which is critically important to developing confidence in the Christian faith. “Articulacy fosters reality.”⁸¹ Helping one’s children to claim a creed is a challenging task for Christian parents, as is noted by Smith and Denton:

A major challenge for religious educators of youth, therefore, seems to us to be fostering articulation, helping teens to practice talking about their faith, providing practice at using vocabularies, grammars, stories, and key messages of faith.⁸²

Claiming a creed is the discipline of articulating one’s faith, which is vitally important for anyone’s spiritual formation and maturity. “. . . religious faith, practice, and commitment can be no more than vaguely real when people cannot talk much about them.”⁸³

Belonging to a Community

The second discipleship practice we will explore as being a cultural tool used by Jesus to facilitate spiritual growth and maturity in the lives of his disciples is that which Dean refers to as Belonging to a Community. The findings of the National Study of Youth and Religion led those responsible for the research to conclude that “the best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious

79. Timothy S. Laniak, *Shepherds After My Own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2006), 185.

80. Matt 10:16a.

81. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 268.

82. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 268.

83. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 269.

about their faith communities.”⁸⁴ Jesus was fully devoted to his faith community, which he called the kingdom⁸⁵ of God.⁸⁶ According to Wright, “‘God’s kingdom’ and ‘kingdom of heaven’ mean the same thing: the sovereign rule of God (that is, the rule of heaven, of the one who lives in heaven), which according to Jesus was and is breaking in to the present world, to earth. That is what Jesus taught us to pray for.”⁸⁷

Biblical Theology of Belonging to a Community

Throughout the Old Testament, the concept of God’s children begins and ends with a communal emphasis. Beginning with the creation narrative, God insists that it is not good for a human being to be alone.⁸⁸ Looking further, rather than choose an individual to represent him in the world, God chose a nation.

The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.⁸⁹

Marvin Wilson explains that, in the concept of the Hebrew people, “the individual was always thought of in the collective (family, tribe, nation) and the collective in the individual.”⁹⁰ Wilson continues by asserting that even past and future members were seen as a single personality,

84. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

85. “Scholars are not agreed as to the basic meaning of *basileia* (Heb. *malkût*). Many have defended the view that the *basileia* is the ‘eschaton’ – the final eschatological order. However, the Hebrew word has the abstract dynamic or idea of reign, rule, or dominion.” Ladd, *A Theology of The New Testament*, 60.

86. “The phrase ‘the kingdom of heavens’ occurs only in Matthew, where it is used thirty-two times. Several times in Matthew, and everywhere in the rest of the New Testament, the phrase ‘kingdom of God’ is used. ‘The kingdom of heavens’ is a Semitic idiom, where heavens is a substitute for the divine name (see Lk. 15:18).” Ladd, *A Theology of The New Testament*, 61.

87. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York, NY, HarperOne, 2008), 201.

88. Gen 2:18.

89. Deut 7:7 NIV.

90. Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI / Dayton, OH: Wm. B. Eerdmans / Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1989), 187.

which is explicitly recognized in the multi-generational promise that Moses invites all of Israel to commit themselves to:

I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.⁹¹

The New Testament also insists upon a communal understanding of following Jesus. As Fitzmyer insists, “There is no mere individualistic experience for Christians, but a corporate one.”⁹² Just as Israel lives as a community, the body of Christ, as Paul states, “though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body . . .”⁹³

Exemplifying Israel’s commitment to oneness between themselves, their ancestors, and their descendants, Jesus himself also prays for his followers to live as a community of multi-generational oneness:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me."⁹⁴

Jesus’ Invitation

When Jesus’ discipleship ministry began, he gathered a small community of followers with the invitation, “Come, follow me . . .”⁹⁵ Nolland shares that this call of Jesus is an invitation to literally follow him as apprentices who will learn to “carry out the same activity as Jesus

91. Deut 29:14-15 NIV.

92. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Pauline Theology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 66, quoted in Marvin R. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI / Dayton, OH: Wm. B. Eerdmans / Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1989), 189.

93. 1 Cor 12:12 NIV.

94. John 17:20-21 NIV.

95. See Matt 4:19.

himself.”⁹⁶ Following Jesus was not only a commitment to Jesus, but also a commitment to one another as fellow followers who, like a family, love each other as the Father loves the Son.⁹⁷

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."⁹⁸

Accepting Jesus' call to be his disciple was an agreement to enter a devoted family that included a drastic change of lifestyle, "which," as France says, "involves them in joining Jesus as his essential support group for the whole period of his public ministry."⁹⁹

When Jesus' death became imminent, he prayed for his disciples' commitment of communal dedication to one another—current and future:

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."¹⁰⁰

Wilson states that, since biblical times, corporate personality is central to the Hebraic concept of Jewish community, writing, "This corporate solidarity was reinforced by the fact that the entire community (past ancestors and future members) was viewed as one personality . . ."¹⁰¹ For the followers of Jesus, discipleship meant a commitment of familial companionship with Jesus and the other disciples. Furthermore, spiritual maturity for Jesus' followers depends on

96. Nolland, *The Gospel of John*, 179.

97. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 483-85.

98. John 13:34-35 NIV.

99. R. T. France, *The New International Commentary On the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 145.

100. John 17:20-23 NIV.

101. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 187.

community faithfulness. As the apostle Paul teaches in his letter to the Corinthians, believers are the body of Christ, and each individual is a member of Christ's body.¹⁰² Describing the characteristics and qualifiers of a "distinctly evangelical theology of spiritual maturity," Smith explains that the vision needs to "incorporate both individuals and corporate dimensions of the Christian life, so that we can speak of an individual as a mature Christian but do so in a way that only makes sense in community, and then conversely also speak of a maturing community that only makes sense as its individual members are growing in faith, hope, and love."¹⁰³

It is in community that discipleship is most effectively taught and reinforced. As Wilson attests, God created human beings to be social and to function as a body.¹⁰⁴ Citing Mark 12:28-34, Wilson further affirms:

A person's true meaning derives from relationships with God and with other human beings.¹⁰⁵

The Disciples' Appropriation

Jesus' first and most intimately acquainted disciples were familiar with the communal commitment required by first century Jewish rabbis, which included adopting the identity of the discipleship community as one's own.¹⁰⁶ Accepting Jesus' invitation to follow him, the original twelve disciples of Jesus were committing themselves to Jesus and to the group. Although they were given to occasional disagreements, jealousy, and other human character flaws from time to time (Judas Iscariot would eventually betray Jesus and abandon his fellow followers), the

102. 1 Cor 12:27.

103. Gordon T. Smith, *Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2010), 91.

104. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 186.

105. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 186.

106. Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, 189.

original twelve devoted themselves to the familial nature of discipleship that Jesus' rabbinic leadership required. France points out that once Jesus calls his disciples to follow him, it is not until they desert him in the garden of Gethsemane¹⁰⁷ that Matthew's gospel no longer speaks of Jesus alone but as Jesus being accompanied by the messianic community.¹⁰⁸

It is within the Christian community that the disciples enact the God-story (creed) they confess¹⁰⁹ with its goal of transforming believers into the image of Christ, who imitate his perfect love of God and neighbor.¹¹⁰ This expression of Christian love of neighbor is observed in the writings of Luke, who reports the communal activities of the believers in the book of Acts. Luke writes that on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, which deepened their sense of unity, and all the believers voluntarily "held everything in common."¹¹¹

Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they *began* selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.¹¹²

With the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' closest followers modeled and regenerated the important practice of community as they expressed through self-giving love among the early believers, and this cultural tool was on full display in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:31-37.

107. Matt 26:56.

108. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 145.

109. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

110. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 60.

111. F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary On the New Testament: the Book of the Acts*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 74.

112. Acts 2: 43-47 NAU.

Parents, who introduce their children to the communal nature of Christian faith, expose them to the spiritual and social connections that are invaluable for experiencing evidence of God's confidence in them, which is a confidence that is mediated through the love and trust given by fellow Christians.¹¹³ The findings of the National Study of Youth and Religion suggest that parents are "indispensable partners in the religious formation of youth,"¹¹⁴ with a role of doing more than simply exposing their children to religion, which, as Smith and Denton say, is all, it seems to the researchers of the NSYR, that most adults want to do with teenagers.¹¹⁵

Within the intimacy of immediate family, Christian formation has the effect of showing children the connection "between religious instruction . . . and the lives of people who love them."¹¹⁶ In effect, parents take the role of catechists—spiritual guides—who show their children "how to use the cultural tools of Christian tradition" and introduce their children "to a way of life, not just a way of believing—to translate God's radical acceptance of us in Jesus Christ into radical acceptance of one another."¹¹⁷

Pursuing a Call

Beyond introducing the spiritual practices of Claiming a Creed and Belonging to a Community, Dean describes the need for young people to understand that the universe they occupy is one in which their "choices have meanings and consequences beyond themselves."¹¹⁸

113. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 74.

114. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

115. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

116. Dean states that this is one of the noteworthy reasons that Luther's Small Catechism was "widely regarded as an educational masterpiece. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 111.

117. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 118.

118. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 75.

This third practice, which we will explore as being one used by Jesus to facilitate spiritual growth and maturity in the lives of his disciples, is that which Dean refers to as Pursuing a Call.¹¹⁹ Highly devoted young people, Dean says, feel called to contribute to the larger purpose of God.¹²⁰

Citing results of the National Study of Youth and Religion, Dean says highly devoted teenagers live in what is referred to as a “morally significant universe,” which means they see their decisions as having consequences for the well-being of other people.¹²¹ Pursuing a call as followers of Jesus means discovering the purpose that God has for one’s life, which is a purpose that goes beyond one’s personal actions or future in terms of what the follower of Jesus wants for themselves; it is a purpose that makes one “morally bound to contribute to God’s purpose in the world,”¹²² including their individual participation in specific ministry opportunities.”¹²³

Biblical Theology of Pursuing a Call

The call is the purpose each follower of Jesus pursues as a result of knowing that Christians live in a “morally significant universe,” whereby the choices made by each Christian “have meanings and consequences beyond themselves.”¹²⁴

In the Old Testament, the book of Isaiah reveals the task of Israel to be the means for all nations to come to God, until chapter 49, which describes the Servant, who was called by God

119. Dean also uses the title “Pursuing a Purpose.” Dean, *Almost Christian*, 50.

120. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

121. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

122. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 76.

123. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 76.

124. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 75.

from the womb,¹²⁵ who would be the “ideal Israel” and not a mere human individual,¹²⁶ and who would do what Israel as a people could not do¹²⁷—restore Israel and be a light that will bring God’s salvation to all the world.¹²⁸ The Servant, described in Isaiah 11:1-5, would be the incarnate Word of God—the Messiah, which is fully expressed in John’s Gospel¹²⁹:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.¹³⁰

In the New Testament, the Light of the World—the Messiah—who refers to himself as the light of the world as long as he is in the world,¹³¹ also tells his followers they are the light of the world,¹³² calling them to join him in the pursuit of making disciples of all nations.¹³³

All Christians are invited to pursue the call of Christ by serving together faithfully, exercising the respective gifts that are received according to the grace given to each believer.¹³⁴ As Os Guinness explains, “calling is the spur that keeps us journeying purposefully—and thus growing and maturing—to the very end of our lives.”¹³⁵

125. Deut 49:1.

126. John N. Oswalt, *The New International Commentary On the Old Testament: The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66* (Grand Rapids, Michigan / Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 291.

127. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 288-93.

128. Deut 49:6.

129. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 290.

130. John 1:1-4 NIV.

131. John 8:12; 9:5.

132. Matt 5:14.

133. Matt 28:19.

134. Rom 12:6.

Jesus' Invitation

When Jesus called his followers, his invitation was to an apprenticeship that would go beyond each disciples' personal training and benefits; it was an apprenticeship that would include teaching them to train apprentices. When seeking out his first disciples, Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, and when he saw two men fishing, he invited them to serve as his apprentice-making apprentices.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people."¹³⁶

France describes this invitation "to fish for people," as a role of discipleship that includes "recruiting new subjects to God's kingship."¹³⁷ It is indeed a call that goes well beyond each of the disciples' personal actions and individual futures.

Answering Jesus' invitation means pursuing a call that will include sacrifice and suffering for the well-being of others. Jesus did not invite his followers to an apprenticeship of self-centeredness, convenience, and comfort—his invitation is not a call to Moralistic, Therapeutic Deism—but a call to give themselves for the purposes of God as Jesus gives himself for the purposes of God. Jesus' followers are invited to be like their Master—to serve, not to be served.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."¹³⁸

135. Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2003), 228.

136. Matt 4:19 NIV.

137. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 147.

138. Matt 20:25-28 NIV.

When would-be disciples offered themselves to Jesus, but their obedience to follow him hinted at or included provisos, Jesus was quick to remind them of the inconvenient and immediate nature of his apprenticeship invitation.

Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."¹³⁹

Following his resurrection, and just before his ascension, Jesus came to his disciples and gave them the command to be disciple makers.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations . . ."¹⁴⁰

The command and commission from the risen Jesus to his closest (now 11, following Judas Iscariot's betrayal, departure, and suicide) disciples, as Matthew has it, is for them to go and make disciples (μαθητεύσατε), that is, go with the authority and presence of the risen Christ, and be disciple-making disciples. This is Jesus' invitation to participate in a purpose that is greater than themselves, and which, as Smith and Denton explain, is a call to live in a "morally significant universe,"—a universe that "provides weight and gravity to living," and "impregnates life's choices, commitments, and moral actions with purpose. . . . In a morally significant universe, one's decisions and practices and deeds bear the burden and reflect the significance of a much bigger story or system of import—one that gets its significance somewhere other than one's own life."¹⁴¹

139. Matt 8:19-22 NIV.

140. Matt 28:18-19a NIV.

141. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 156-7.

With the invitation to follow him, Jesus has given his disciples the opportunity to pursue a call that is eternally significant. It is the pursuit of a purpose that has meaning beyond self. Again, the importance of such a call is clearly explained by Smith and Denton as it pertains to the way highly religious teenagers see their role and their world within a larger, meaningful narrative.

A morally significant universe has a telos, an end, goal, and standard, by which one knows where one is and to where one is headed. It thus provides individuals the big script of a very real drama, in the sense both that the story is intensely dramatic and that the drama is reality, within which the living out of one's life really means something significant because of the role it somehow plays in helping to perform the larger dramatic narrative.¹⁴²

The Disciples' Appropriation

In his excellent book on calling, Guinness asserts, "The key to answering the call is to be devoted to no one and to nothing above God Himself."¹⁴³ It is the challenge to the lack of such wisdom on the part of the disciples that Jesus challenges his disciples' absence of certainty about their purpose¹⁴⁴ when Peter and the others who join him go back to fishing for fish¹⁴⁵ even after witnessing and spending time with the risen Christ on two previous occasions.¹⁴⁶ In his commentary on John's gospel, Morris cautiously states that we do not have enough information in the incident to know for certain why the disciples made the spontaneous decision to go back to

142. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 157.

143. Guinness, *The Call*, 42.

144. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 759.

145. John 21:1-3.

146. John 20:19-29.

their previous vocation, but the impression we are left with is that they are “men without a purpose.”¹⁴⁷

After fishing all night and catching nothing, Jesus appeared to the disciples again on the shore. He gave them instructions to cast their nets on the right side of the boat, and they caught 153 fish—a catch so large that the men could not haul the net into the boat. Up until their experience of this magnificent catch, the disciples did not know the man giving them fishing instructions from the shore was Jesus, but after the catch, John told Peter the man is Jesus! Making their way to the shore to join Jesus, they find that he has prepared a fire for which they will take from their enormous catch to supply the food for breakfast. It is after they finish eating that Jesus presents Peter with the opportunity to once again pursue a call.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."¹⁴⁸

Whatever is meant by “these” in verse 15, the heart of Jesus’ question to Peter has to do with getting Peter to admit where his “supreme affection” lies.¹⁴⁹ As Guinness reminds his readers, “We are not primarily called to do something or go somewhere; we are called to Someone.”¹⁵⁰ Seven weeks after the resurrection, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it is Peter who spoke to the confused crowd. Standing confidently with the other eleven disciples, Peter addressed the crowd to explain what God was doing in the

147. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 760.

148. John 21:15-17 NIV.

149. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 768.

150. Guinness, *The Call*, 42.

presence of everyone who was witnessing the miraculous signs of this prophetic fulfillment.¹⁵¹

Upon the conclusion of Peter's speech, the call to make disciples, baptizing them in the name of Christ, was carried out, resulting in the repentance and baptism of about three thousand people that day.

The call, or purpose, given by Christ is not simply to make disciples but for the disciples themselves, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to be transformed into Christ's likeness with ever-increasing glory.¹⁵² "Therefore, the disciples were pursuing a call that was not fully specific, but would be made known throughout their lives, and would include the welcome experiences of sharing the love and salvation found only in Christ as well as the troubling and horrifying experiences of ostracization, imprisonment, torture, and martyrdom. The purpose for which Jesus' first and closest disciples would ultimately pursue is one that, as Nolland writes, "emerges into clarity only through stages . . ." ¹⁵³ Nolland's understanding of the non-punctiliar clarity of a disciple's call is affirmed by Guinness, who writes, "In many cases a clear sense of calling comes only through a time of searching, including trial and error."¹⁵⁴

As parents introduce their children to spiritual disciplines and practices, it is the pursuit of Christ's call that helps children "equate moral responsibility with following Jesus Christ."¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, participation in pursuing a call means not considering one's actions or future only

151. Acts 2:14-41.

152. 2 Cor 3:18.

153. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 670.

154. Guinness, *The Call*, 51.

155. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 76.

in terms of one's personal wants; it means making sacrifices for the good of others and telling other people about the Christ they serve and follow.¹⁵⁶

Confessing Confidence

The final cultural tool that we will discuss as being one used by Jesus to facilitate spiritual growth and maturity in the lives of his disciples, is that which Dean calls Harboring Hope.¹⁵⁷ Referring to the research and results of the NSYR, Dean writes, "Hope, for the most part, provided highly devoted teenagers with a resource for getting through the present—which in turn gave them confidence that they had the tools necessary to face whatever hardships may lie ahead."¹⁵⁸

In his sermon, entitled, "The New Birth," John Bunyan said, "A child that is newly born, if it have not other comforts to keep it warm, than it had in its mother's womb, dies; it must have something got for its succor. So at his birth Christ had swaddling clothes prepared for him. So those that are born again, must have some promise of Christ to keep them alive."¹⁵⁹ Confessing confidence is what gives followers of Jesus the strength and courage to live as people who trust that, regardless of one's experiences, be they good or devastating, God is ultimately in control of the final outcome.¹⁶⁰

156. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 76.

157. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 76. To understand why the category name is changed to Confessing Confidence, see note 26.

158. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 78.

159. Clyde E. Fant, Jr. and William M. Pinson, Jr., *20 Centuries of Great Preaching: an Encyclopedia of Preaching*, vol. 2, *Luther to Massillon 1483-1742* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1971), 343.

160. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 77.

Biblical Theology of Confessing Confidence

Trust in the eschatological promises of God that the world is heading toward the ultimate good gives God's people the confidence to face the difficulties and challenges of life.

In the Old Testament, God made promises to his people that often appeared impossible to keep in the eyes of human beings. Yet, those who confessed confidence in God's promises for the future were able to overcome their doubts and live in ways that would be impossible for the hopeless. An excellent example of such confidence is found in Genesis 15, where Abram is promised by God that he and his wife Sarai will father a child in their old age—Abram would be 99 years old and Sarai would be 90 years old by the time this promise of God comes to fruition. Because Abram believed God, God credited this belief to Abram as righteousness.¹⁶¹ Abram's confidence in God's promise, despite the perceived impossibility of such a promise coming true, was expressed in his confidence in God's ability to keep his promises. The word "belief" in Genesis 15:6 is the English translation of the Hebrew hiphil form of the Hebrew verb *אָמַן*, meaning to stand firm and trust.¹⁶²

In the New Testament, Abram's confidence in God's promised future of, not only bearing a child in his and his wife's old age but he would also be the father of countless offspring, is mentioned by the author of Hebrews:

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.¹⁶³

161. Gen 15:6.

162. William Gesenius, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the old Testament: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, ed. Francis Brown, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 53.

163. Heb 6:13-15 NIV.

It is this confidence in God's fulfillment of all his promises, that the writer of Hebrews encourages all believers to confess through the faithfulness of our lives:

Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.¹⁶⁴

In his commentary on John, D. A. Carson explains that Jesus' encouragement to his disciples, that they not be troubled but trust in him as they trust in God,¹⁶⁵ was given during a time when they were “under substantial emotional pressure” and “were on the brink of catastrophic failure,” because they were confused and threatened by his message of his “imminent departure.”¹⁶⁶ Therefore, it is under such uncertain and emotionally fearful conditions that Jesus exhorts his followers to trust him, just as they trust God, and to take hold of his eschatological promise:

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.¹⁶⁷

The confidence that followers of Jesus confess is a hope that the writer of Hebrews speaks of metaphorically as an anchor. Using two “unchangeable things,” that is, God's inability to lie and the oath God made that confirms his promise, God's people can be assured that

164. Heb 6:9-12 NIV.

165. John 14:1.

166. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 487.

167. John 14:2-4 NIV.

“we are moored to an immovable object”—and that immovable object is the throne of God himself, established (as is made clear in ch. 9) in the heavenly holy of holies, the counterpart in the eternal order to the inner sanctuary of the wilderness tabernacle, shut off from the outer sanctuary by the heavy curtain behind which dwelt the invisible presence of the god of Israel. And our hope is fixed there because Jesus is there, seated, as we have already been told, at ‘the right hand of the Majesty on high’ (1:3). His presence there is a powerful corroboration of our hope. Abraham rested his hope in the promise and oath of God; but we have more than that to rest our hope upon: we have the fulfilment of his promise in the exaltation of Christ. No wonder that our hope is secure and stable.¹⁶⁸

Jesus’ Invitation

In the region of Caesarea Philippi, following Jesus’ questioning of his disciples regarding his identity, which were followed by the Petrine confession¹⁶⁹ and Jesus’ bestowal of the name Peter¹⁷⁰ upon Simon,¹⁷¹ Jesus introduces the opportunity for his disciples to confess confidence in his ability to protect them from “the imprisoning power of death.”¹⁷²

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.¹⁷³

Regardless of whether “rock” refers to Peter himself or to the confession of Peter, Jesus’ assertion that he himself will build his church (ἐκκλησία) and Peter will “play a foundational role,”¹⁷⁴ is Jesus’ promise that he will gather his Messianic assembly, which will be made up of the newly defined people of God, not as the nation of Israel but as the people of God who come

168. F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary On the New Testament: The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 155.

169. Matt 16:16.

170. Πέτρος, meaning “Rock,” which Nolland explains, was a name given to Simon by Jesus “as a means of marking destiny in some manner.” Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 668.

171. Matt 16:13-18a.

172. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 624.

173. Matt 16:18 NIV.

174. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 672.

to follow Jesus from all nations.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, Jesus promises his disciples that death itself will not be able to hold the members of his Messianic community. As France explains, “‘The Gates of Hades’ is a metaphor for death, which here contrasts strikingly with the phrase ‘the living God’ in v. 16.”¹⁷⁶ Just as Isaiah 38:10 speaks of “the gates of Sheol,” the NT equivalent, “the gates of Hades” is a metaphorical phrase, describing death and its power to imprison the dead¹⁷⁷ with fortifying gates that do not allow the dead to escape.¹⁷⁸ The image Jesus is giving is one that ensures his disciples that death itself will not be able to take or destroy his community of followers.¹⁷⁹

Jesus’ promise that death will not be able to hold his disciples is a powerful hope for his disciples to pursue; however, this is not the only hope offered by their parental rabbi. In John 14, Jesus gives another promise of hope for his troubled disciples to pursue, who, as Carson writes, “are confused, uncertain of what Jesus means,¹⁸⁰ and threatened by references to his imminent departure.”¹⁸¹

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, *there* you may be also. "And you know the way where I am going."¹⁸²

175. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 623-4.

176. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 624.

177. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 624.

178. William Barclay, *The Daily Bible Study Series: The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2, *Chapters 11 to 28*, rev. ed. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975), 143.

179. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 625.

180. In 13:18-38, Jesus predicts Judas Iscariot’s imminent betrayal and Peter’s impending denial.

181. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 487.

182. John 14:1-4 NAU.

Carson argues that the two uses of the verb πιστεύω, in the second half of verse 1, which the NAU renders ‘believe¹⁸³,’ are both imperative, which Carson further states is supported by nearly all the Old Latin MSS and is the most sensible understanding based on the context.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, Jesus begins instructing his disciples by reassuring them with the authoritative instructions to trust God and to trust Jesus himself, followed by the hope-filled promises that they do not need to be afraid, because, as Morris explains, “he is going to prepare a place in heaven for them. And he is the means of bringing them to the Father.”¹⁸⁵

A final example of Jesus’ provision of an opportunity for his disciples to confess confidence is found at the end of Jesus’ command known as the Great Commission.¹⁸⁶

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”¹⁸⁷

The mystery of this hope speaks to the disciples’ fear of knowing that, in the very near future, they will no longer experience the accompaniment of what they have come to know as Jesus’ physical presence, especially after receiving the command to make disciples throughout the world. Yet, the abrupt end of Matthew’s gospel, which immediately follows the disciples’ reception of their commission, is their receipt of Christ’s promise that they would be accompanied by, as Barclay writes, “the greatest presence in the world.”¹⁸⁸

183. In Carson’s commentary, he quotes from the 1984 edition of the Holy Bible, New International Version, which renders the verb ‘trust.’

184. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 488.

185. Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 565.

186. Matt 28:16-20.

187. Matt 28:20b.

188. Barclay, *Matthew*, 378.

The Disciples' Appropriation

After the ascension of the risen Christ, Jesus' remaining eleven disciples continued in their obedience to Jesus and his commands, even in the face of great suffering and death. Their confidence in Jesus, regardless of their most terrifying circumstances and experiences, was due to the belief they held in their resurrected Savior's desire and ability to save them.

In the book of Acts, Luke writes of Peter's urging everyone present, a crowd which included diaspora Jews from every nation,¹⁸⁹ to repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins.¹⁹⁰ And the response to Peter's confession of confidence in Jesus' desire and power to save them¹⁹¹ just as he is able to save the apostles,¹⁹² resulted in about three thousand disciples being added to the Messianic community that day.¹⁹³

In Acts 10, Luke records that Peter, with six of the disciples,¹⁹⁴ shared the apostles' confession of confidence in Christ's salvation with a large crowd of Gentiles¹⁹⁵ in a Gentile home,¹⁹⁶ a controversial act for Jews, even for Jewish Christians, which caused Peter to receive criticism from the circumcised believers in Jerusalem.¹⁹⁷

189. Acts 2:5.

190. Acts 2:38.

191. Acts 2:40.

192. Acts 10:34-35.

193. Acts 2:41 NIV.

194. Acts 11:12.

195. Acts 10:27.

196. Acts 10:24-28.

197. Acts 11:1-3.

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all."¹⁹⁸

Because of God's grace and the responding faith of the Gentile believers, the Holy Spirit came upon all those listening to Peter's message,¹⁹⁹ and Peter ordered that all of them be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.²⁰⁰

Besides those mentioned above, there are many other examples of Jesus' disciples' confessing confidence in Jesus for the salvation of all people recorded in Scripture. There is also evidence of the disciples' confession of confidence in Christ's salvation in extrabiblical, ancient literature as well as evidence of the disciples' faithfulness in confessing confidence in Jesus that is not recorded but is evidenced in the continuing growth of the worldwide discipleship community of Christ to this day.

Jesus himself gives all believers the powerful promise of hope in the face of whatever trouble we will face, when he encourages his first disciples with these confidence-instilling words:

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."²⁰¹

Carson writes that Jesus is not referring to a "personal overcoming," but, through his death, he has conquered the world, making the opposition of the world a pointless, beggarly effort, so that

198. Acts 10:34-36 NIV

199. Acts 10:44.

200. Acts 10:48.

201. John 16:33b NIV.

his followers share in his victory, knowing that Jesus ultimately triumphs; therefore, Jesus' followers have the confidence "to share his peace."²⁰²

Presenting the cultural tool of confessing confidence is a vital resource that Christian parents provide for their children in the form of a spiritual practice, which gives young people the resource they need for getting through struggles in the present as well as the confidence they need to face hardships in the future.²⁰³

No Guarantee

The four cultural tools outlined in this dissertation are a means of catechesis, and as Kenda Dean warns, catechesis does not guarantee followership.²⁰⁴ Dean goes on to write, "Only the Holy Spirit ignites faith, transforming human effort into holy fire that comes roaring into our lives at the first hint of welcome, insistent on igniting us, sharing us, and being shared."²⁰⁵ To be sure, no one is saved by cultural tools. It is only by grace that God's children are saved through faith, which is not of the followers own doing—not even by way of catechesis—it is the gift of God.²⁰⁶ A creed, community, call, and confidence are not cultural tools we acquire, but tools we surrender, along with ourselves, to God, who, as Dean says, "transforms them, and us, into means of grace."²⁰⁷

Recommending catechesis to pastors, Richard Baxter, in his seminal book, *The Reformed Pastor*, assures Christian ministers that catechesis "will essentially promote the orderly building

202. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 550.

203. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 78.

204. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 63.

205. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 63.

206. Eph 2:8.

207. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 60.

up of those who are converted, and the establishment of them in the faith.”²⁰⁸ Baxter continues to clarify that one cannot build, unless a good foundation is laid first; after all, he goes on, “‘Grace makes no leaps,’ any more than nature.”²⁰⁹

Writing in response to Ephesians 2:8, Adam Clarke states in his *Commentary on The Bible*,

Therefore it was God’s free mercy to you, manifested through Christ, in whom you were commanded to believe; and having believed by the power of the Holy Spirit, you received, and were sealed by, the Holy Spirit of promise; so that this salvation is in no sense of yourselves, but is the ‘free gift’ of God and not of any kind of works; so that no man can boast as having wrought out his own salvation, or even contributed anything towards it.²¹⁰

Just as it is only by grace through faith, which is assured by the power of the Holy Spirit in the believer, that generative faith is made possible in all believers, so it is in the lives of the children of clergy parents. Therefore, clergy parents who want to facilitate spiritual maturity in their children must recognize that, as Leslie Fields reminds her readers, their first and most important calling is not to bring their children to Christ, but to be parents whose most important calling is having no other gods before him (Exodus 20:3) and obeying Jesus’ command to love God with all their soul, strength and mind (Luke 10:27).²¹¹ Obedience to, and love of, Christ first is paramount to clergy parents’ facilitation of spiritual maturity in their children, because, as

208. Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Lexington, KY: Legacy Publications, 2011), 71.

209. Baxter, *Reformed Pastor*, 71.

210. Adam Clark, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on The Bible*, ed. Ralph Earle, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967), 1173.

211. Leslie Leyland Fields, “*Parenting is Your Highest Calling*”: *And 8 Other Myths that Trap Us in Worry and Guilt* (Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press, 2008), 66.

Fields also explains: “If I pursue God first as my highest call and am satisfied in his love, then I am freed not to love my children less but to love them rightly.”²¹²

Conclusion

As a parental leader of his first 12 disciples, Jesus facilitated opportunities for spiritual formation that would equip his first followers to develop spiritual maturity and to become disciple-makers themselves, who would equip others to become spiritually mature followers of Jesus as well. As his community of apprentices, his first 12 disciples became a family, whose dependence on Jesus’ parent-like love, correction, and guidance were integral to the eventual building of Jesus’ worldwide, eternal ecclesia. It is by learning to lead one’s own children as Jesus led his initial 12 disciples that all Christian parents can present the cultural tools of claiming a creed, belonging to a community, pursuing a call, and confessing a confidence to their own children in their attempt to obey the command of Christ to make disciples even, and especially, in their own homes. Discipling one’s children is the primary role of Christian parents, which Thompson asserts, saying,

It is virtually impossible to overestimate the importance of the family to a child’s total development. The basic formation of character and development of personality that occurs within the home covers all the bases: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. I believe that the spiritual dimension of human life is the broadest and most encompassing, the sphere within which all other dimensions of life find expression. Therefore whatever formation takes place within the home inevitably touches our spiritual lives, whether for good or for ill. That is why I believe that the family, more than any other context of life, is the foundational arena of spiritual formation for children.²¹³

Just as Jesus’ emphasis on discipleship was the maturing of his followers into imitators of himself, it is the primary role of Christian parents to facilitate Christ-centered spiritual maturity

212. Fields, *“Parenting is Your Highest Calling,”* 73.

213. Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, rev. and expanded ed., (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1996), 20.

in the lives of their own offspring. Ogden confirms this, writing that the primary discipleship community is the home and the primary disciplers are parents.²¹⁴

The ultimate model for the theological and biblical framework of discipling one's own children in the Christian faith is exemplified by Jesus' methods of discipleship within his Messianic community, consisting of himself and his first 12 disciples. It is in the recordings of Jesus' interactions with his disciples that we witness the evidence of Jesus' catechistic methods of introducing and instilling the spiritual practices of claiming a creed, belonging to a community, pursuing a call, and confessing confidence that are essential to developing spiritual maturity in the lives of young believers, as the apostle Paul adds:

until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.²¹⁵

214. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, rev. and expanded ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 96-7.

215. Eph 4:13 NIV.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, academic and scholarly research articles, relevant books, and credible web resources are reviewed in order to critically analyze the topic of the most and least effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of clergy parents. Clergy parents, whose desire is to transfer a healthy form of faith to their sons and daughters, must begin by recognizing the work-related challenges that are inherent within the ministerial vocation. Beginning with an examination of widely recognized clergy family stressors, this review compared the work of numerous research articles that show how the pastoral vocation presents challenges to clergy parents' ability to disciple their children. Next, this review outlines some of the job-related influences that can disrupt clergy parents' effectiveness as disciple-makers at home. Finally, this review examines some of the specific, external and internal, influences associated with the occupational stressors inherent in the life of clergy parents that can be detrimental to clergy parents' facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. The available literature on the topic of work-related stressors that influence clergy parents' facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of their children is growing but minimal in its availability. However, the available research is consistent on the need for clergy parents to recognize how ministry-related, vocational stressors influence their discipling role as Christian parents.

As an evangelical member of the universal Christian Church, The Salvation Army is a recognized participant in the mission of Jesus Christ throughout the world. Its work, which began in England in 1865 and now actively serves in 130 countries, places an emphasis on meeting human needs in Christ's name without discrimination, giving most of its denominational attention to ministry among each community's poorest members. The challenges associated with ministering to the neediest members of society, serving at the will of the organization as itinerant clergy members, and managing the growing responsibilities of leading a faith-based, non-profit, social services organization can add complications to Salvation Army officers' parental responsibility of ministering to their own children. All clergy families are susceptible to added difficulties regarding clergy parents' facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, and with the ever-increasing ministerial and administrative requirements of officership, Salvation Army clergy are no exception.

Clergy Family Stressors

It is unfortunate that empirical literature, which addresses the effects of work-related stressors on clergy families, is scarce.¹ In their book, entitled, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister's Family and The Local Congregation*, authors Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick state, "Although numerous recent works teach how to minister to families, little has been written regarding the minister's own family."² In more recent decades, however, there has been a growing interest in the scholarly research of clergy families, and, although empirical research remains relatively sparse, the literature that is available on the subject of how work-related

1. Michael Lane Morris and Priscilla White Blanton, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," *Family Relations* 43, no. 2 (April 1994): 190.

2. Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister's Family and The Local Congregation* (Pasadena, California: Fuller Seminary Press, 2006), 15.

stressors effect spiritual formation in the children of clergy families is the result of studies in which random sampling, standardized instrumentation, and statistical analyses have been utilized to gather information from clergy, clergy spouses, and the children of clergy parents.

Kinnaman and Matlock's claim that "today's society is especially and insidiously faith repellent,"³ undergirds the importance of knowing and admitting that the facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of children can be a challenging and difficult task for any Christian family, and the task may be further complicated by additional challenges and dangers inherent within clergy families. In her often-cited book, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, Marjorie J. Thompson reminds her readers that "the home environment is a child's first classroom for learning about others and about the world."⁴

Thompson goes on to say that children reflect and rapidly absorb the feelings, values, beliefs, and living patterns of their parents, and the intimacy children have with the members of their family in the home affects their relationship with God.⁵ In their article, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," Morris and Blanton utilized multiple research methods to examine the ways in which work-related stressors affect the marital, parental, and global life satisfaction of clergy and their spouses from multiple denominations.⁶ One result of their research, which coincides with the findings of other scholarly research, is that

3. David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock, *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019), 15.

4. Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, rev. and expanded ed., (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1996), 22.

5. Thompson, *Family*, 23.

6. Morris and Blanton, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," 189.

clergy families are subject to occupational stressors that are common to other professional family types, such as executive families, including issues associated with,

- Mobility
- Financial compensation
- Expectations and time demands
- Intrusions of family boundaries
- Social support.⁷

The results of Morris and Blanton's research show that intrusions on family boundaries negatively influenced marital satisfaction for clergy husbands and wives, whereas the stressor of time demands was reported by clergy family wives as an additional negative influence on parental satisfaction.⁸ In contrast to Morris and Blanton's finding, regarding time demands as a stressor of clergy family wives, Rowatt's research shows that "time expectations" was reported twenty percent more often as a stressor for male clergy than it was for their wives.⁹

For clergy families, work-related stressors can complicate the process of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. As Thompson says,

Christian spirituality is primarily and essentially relational. From the standpoint of faith, the way we relate to one another must be identified as the quintessential spiritual discipline of family and church life. . . . There is nothing abstract or easy about expressing consistent respect and care for one another, especially amid the mundane, repetitious routines and daily stresses of life together. That's what makes family spirituality such a challenge.

Lee and Balswick explain that "it is not the clergy family, but their social environment that is unique."¹⁰ J. DeLuca calls the clergy profession a "holy crossfire" because the clergy

7. Morris and Blanton, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," 189.

8. Morris and Blanton, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," 193.

9. G. Wade Rowatt, "Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families," *Review and Expositor* 98, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 530.

10. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 57.

family is one in which every member is juggling “the expectations of self, family, congregation, denomination, and God.”¹¹ The unique social environment of clergy families is described by Lee and Balswick as “a social subsystem, or system-within-a-system, seated squarely within the larger context of the local church.”¹² It is within this unique social ecosystem, that is, the clergy family within the congregational family, that work-related stressors are most notably experienced by the clergy family. The research of Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick includes a list of the five recurring themes that ran through all the answers of the clergy family members that participated in their survey, which is presented in order, from most frequently to least frequently occurring:

- Do not have enough family time together
- High expectations placed on them
- The minister’s salary
- The stress of moving
- A lack of privacy.¹³

The research of G. Wade Rowatt, entitled, “Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families,” in which fifty-five male clergy, twenty-five female clergy, twenty-two wives of male clergy, and six husbands of female clergy in five states were surveyed, shows five areas of clergy family stress that are similar to other studies:

- Expectations
- Compensation
- Social Support
- Mobility
- Time¹⁴

11. J. Deluca, “The holy crossfire: Diagnosis of a pastor’s position,” *Pastoral Psychology* 28 (1980): 233-242, quoted in Michael Lane Morris and Priscilla White Blanton, “The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives,” *Family Relations* 43, no. 2 (April 1994): 189.

12. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 58.

13. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 190-5.

14. G. Wade Rowatt, “Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families.” *Review and Expositor* 98, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 531.

In their research, entitled, “The family stress process: The Double ABC-X model of adjustment and adaptation,” McCubbin and Patterson confirm that the unique context of the clergy family includes “occupationally related stressors that place heavy strains and demands on their resources, which can inhibit the growth of members and satisfaction of intrafamily relationships.”¹⁵ Furthermore, clergy families, like all families, have a desire to meet their individual and family goals and objectives through that which Michael L. Morris and Priscilla Blanton, in their article, entitled, “Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses: Influences of Social Context and Perceptions of Work-Related Stressors,” call “relational and behavioral maintenance patterns,” which they say “will enhance personal and relational growth and well-being within their own social contexts.”¹⁶ However, the overall family functioning of clergy families, Morris and Blanton continue, “can be influenced by socio-contextual variables and perceptions of occupationally-related stresses” that effect the overall functioning of clergy families.¹⁷

The results of many surveys list the disadvantages and difficulties of being a member of a clergy family; however, one research survey revealed the positive aspects of clergy family life. There were survey participants of Pat Valeriano’s research, entitled, “A Survey of Ministers’ Wives,” who shared some of the benefits of belonging to a clergy family.¹⁸ The wife of a

15. Hamilton I. McCubbin and Joan M. Patterson, “The family stress process: The Double ABC-X model of adjustment and adaptation,” *Marriage and Family Review* 6, no. 7 (June 1983): 37, quoted in Michael Lane Morris and Priscilla White Blanton, “The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives,” *Family Relations* 43, no. 2 (April 1994): 189.

16. Michael L. Morris and Priscilla Blanton, “Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses: Influences of Social Context and Perceptions of Work-Related Stressors,” *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 7, no. 1 (March 1998): 28-29.

17. Morris and Blanton, “Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses,” 30.

minister recounted the opportunities afforded to her family, including the privilege of hosting people in their home that other children would never have the opportunity to know, including pastors from Africa, missionaries from foreign nations, and evangelists and preachers with whom her children were able to talk, play games, and from whom her children learned more about the world.¹⁹ There was also the teenage daughter of a minister, who revealed in Valeriano's survey that she is glad to be the child of a clergy parent, because, she stated, "they have sheltered me from most of the world's garbage and I have obtained a solid foundation for my future. But there is one thing that I can do for my dad which would show my support for his ministry; it is to love God with all my heart, mind, and soul, and follow him for the rest of my life. My dad is a wonderful, fun, terrific person!"²⁰

There are also family strength and resilience studies in which the researchers use mixed research methods to study the relationships between difficult experiences, family strengths, and family functioning. The researchers of these studies looked not only at the level of the negative experiences and challenges experienced by families, but they also considered the strengths families used to cope with and become strengthened by their struggles and difficulties. In her article, entitled, "Uncovering Stories of Family Resilience: A Mixed Methods Study of Resilient Families, Part 1," Cynthia A. Lietz researched the ways in which families were able to remain high functioning during difficult experiences.²¹ Lietz's study produced empirical support for the

18. Pat Valeriano, "A Survey of Ministers' Wives," *Leadership* 2 (Fall 1981): 66, cited in Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister's Family and The Local Congregation*, (Pasadena, California: Fuller Seminary Press, 2006), 163.

19. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 163.

20. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 163-4.

21. Cynthia A. Lietz, "Uncovering Stories of Family Resilience: A Mixed Methods Study of Resilient Families, Part 1," *Families in Society* 87, no. 4 (Oct-Dec 2006), 575-582.

strengths model, which “suggests that strength-building can lead to improved outcomes for families,” and that high risk families “can sustain healthy functioning despite the experience of extreme difficulty.”²² The research of John DeFrain and Sylvia M. Asay, in *Strong Families Around the World: Strengths-Based Research and Perspectives*, also conclude that families are able to maintain a healthy level of functioning in the midst of challenges and difficulties when they rely on family strengths, including,

- Appreciation and affection
- Positive communication
- Commitment to the family
- Enjoyable time together
- A sense of spiritual well-being
- The ability to manage stress and crisis effectively.²³

Clergy Parents

Affirming the irreplaceable value of parents as facilitators of spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, Chap Bettis says, “Although the family is not the exclusive means of discipleship, it is meant to be the primary one.”²⁴ In his book, *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works*, George Barna states that “Family life is designed to provide children with an environment in which they can grow to maturity at their natural pace of development. To facilitate that outcome, the family is to provide a home that serves as a sanctuary in the midst of the turmoil that accompanies childhood and young adulthood.”²⁵ Clergy

22. Lietz, “Uncovering Stories of Family Resilience,” 580.

23. John DeFrain and Sylvia M. Asay, eds., *Strong Families Around the World: Strengths-Based Research and Perspectives* (Binghamton, NY: Routledge, 2007), 450-2.

24. Chap Bettis, *The Disciple-Making Parent: A Comprehensive Guidebook for Raising Your Children to Love and Follow Jesus Christ* (n.p.: Diamond Hill Publishing, 2016), 14.

25. George Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works* (West Monroe, LA: Tyndale Momentum, 2010), 137.

parents, despite the inherent stressors of living and raising their children in a clergy family, are responsible for facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, which Barna refers to as “shaping their spirituality” by means of “facilitating understanding, developing character, and advancing their relationship with God.”²⁶

Several scholarly works refer to clergy parents’ susceptibility to numerous external and internal influences that can disrupt the social ecology²⁷ of the clergy family and, thereby, thwart efforts to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.²⁸ In his doctoral dissertation, Noel Cooper explains that “The reason that the pastoral vocation has such a significant effect on the immediate family members is because of the interaction of the family system with the system of the church, which is simultaneously the workplace of one parent and the place of worship and socializing for the rest of the family.”²⁹ The interaction of these two family systems is fertile ground for work-related stressors that are externally imposed on the clergy family through their influence on clergy parents.

For Salvation Army clergy parents, the challenges associated with work-related stressors are further complicated by the fact that both husband and wife are ordained clergy members, serving together in full-time pastoral roles, which presents added difficulty to the parental responsibility of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children when confronted with external influences associated with life in a clergy family.

26. Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting*, 138-40.

27. Lee and Balswick describe the social ecology of a clergy family is that which “is concerned with the social and psychological environment rather than the physical.” Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 22.

28. Lee and Balswick describe the social ecosystem of the clergy family as that which “is concerned with the social and psychological environment rather than the physical.” Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 22.

29. Noel Cooper, “Resilience and Clergy Families” (Psy.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Psychology, 2013), 17, accessed December 7, 2018, <http://proxy.gordonconwell.edu/Login?Url=/docview/1477549275?accountid=11161>.

External Influences

Clergy parents can experience work-related stressors from multiple external influences that impinge upon clergy family preferences.³⁰ These external influences include the congregation for whom clergy parents provide ministry leadership and pastoral care and the organization from which clergy parents receive leadership, guidance, and support.

The Congregation

The congregation can be a source of multiple stressors for clergy parents. Cynthia B. Wilson and Carol A. Darling, in their research article, entitled, “Understanding Stress and Life Satisfaction for Children of Clergy: A Retrospective Study,” in which they surveyed a total of 220 participants, including 86 adult children of Protestant clergy and 134 adult children of non-clergy from forty-five states and 10 different denominations, explain that “The expectations placed on clergy by their congregations often result in their own families’ needs going unmet.”³¹

The first external stressor, imposed on clergy parents by the congregation, which has been the focus of multiple researchers as being a negative imposition upon clergy families, is boundary intrusion. Clergy parents are often susceptible to external influences of boundary ambiguity caused by congregational interferences that impede upon the healthy functioning of the family. Boundary problems that exist between the congregation and the clergy family are that which Lee and Balswick refer to as “idealization and intrusion.”³² Idealization of the clergy family, claim Lee and Balswick, is the result of the congregation believing that the roles of the clergy family are of a special nature that “too often requires some form of moral, spiritual, or

30. Morris and Blanton, “Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses,” 30.

31. Cynthia B. Wilson and Carol A. Darling, “Understanding Stress and Life Satisfaction for Children of Clergy: A Retrospective Study,” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 1 (Feb 2017): 130.

32. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 67.

emotional ‘differentness.’”³³ Idealization causes the members of the clergy family to experience a form of social isolation in which firm social boundaries prevent them from developing genuine, peer-centered friendships with other members of the congregation.³⁴

Intrusion, as Lee and Balswick explain, is that which is often referred to as living in a fishbowl or a glass house.³⁵ Morris and Blanton’s research shows that physical and psychological forms of intrusiveness within clergy families is often extremely problematic; such intrusions can hinder family management and regulation, and they can also cause the clergy family to feel they are being taken advantage of.³⁶ One expression of intrusion is called the “on-call syndrome,” which is the result of a pastor feeling the responsibility to be available to the congregation twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for whatever any member of the congregation considers to be a need.³⁷ Intrusions, Lee and Balswick say, can include inconveniences such as telephone calls at any hour of the night from parishioners making irrational requests, or disruptions of exclusive family times, such as sharing a meal at a restaurant, by members of the congregation who want to engage in an extended conversation about church business.³⁸

The research of Morris and Blanton, which is the result of 136 randomly selected and surveyed clergy couples, who reported an average of 2 children per family, revealed the damage that undue interferences on clergy parents have on the clergy family, stating that

33. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 70.

34. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 70.

35. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 74-5.

36. Morris and Blanton, “Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses,” 38.

37. Cameron Lee and Kurt Fredrickson, *That Their Work Will Be a Joy: Understanding and Coping with the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 33.

38. Lee and Kurt, *That Their Work Will Be a Joy*, 34.

- Healthy family functioning can only occur when family boundaries are unambiguous or clear enough for subsystem members to carry out their functions without undue interference
- Intrusiveness (i.e., lack of privacy, fishbowl, glasshouse) for clergy and their wives is extremely problematic for most clergy families
- The inability to know “who is in” and “who is out” of the family reflects boundary ambiguity that is at best difficult to manage productively
- Intrusiveness may include physical and/or psychological intrusion that may hinder the clergy family’s ability to manage and regulate itself or create feelings of being taken advantage of as an individual or family.³⁹

Cameron Lee mentions examples of boundary problems in his book *PK: Helping Pastors’ Kids Through Their Identity Crisis*, in which he refers to congregational impositions upon the clergy family’s boundaries as “boundary violations.”⁴⁰ Two forms of boundary problems in Lee’s list of 6 boundary violations, which cause great stress to clergy parents, are what Lee calls “Boundary Violation 1: Congregations expecting too much of the clergy family’s time and energy,” and “Boundary Violation 4: Idolizing the clergy family.”⁴¹

Lee explains that ministry demands cross into the boundary of the clergy family’s home when the congregation expects too much of the clergy family’s time and energy.⁴² As a result of this external stressor, the clergy family experiences high levels of stress, because, Lee says, “Having family time without interruption may be difficult, if not impossible. Ministers and their spouses commonly report being overworked and underpaid. Where the church is concerned, they are expected to be at every function, perform every unassigned task, make even the most minor decisions, and be on duty every hour of every day.”⁴³ Too often the boundaries are blurred and

39. Morris and Blanton, “Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses,” 27-41.

40. Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping pastors’ Kids through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 36-53.

41. Lee, *PK*, 36-53.

42. Lee, *PK*, 36-7.

43. Lee, *PK*, 37.

unclear between the clergy family and the congregation, which causes stress, because fuzzy boundaries interfere with the clergy family's ability to define who is in and who is out of the family.⁴⁴

Lee's "Boundary Violation 4: Idolizing the clergy family" happens when the congregation is fascinated by the clergy family, wanting access to their private information and interactions, which might include such extremely private matters as family arguments or the dating habits of the clergy children.⁴⁵ To understand the reason for this boundary violation, Lee cites William Douglas, "who" Lee says, "calls this the phenomenon of the 'royal family': the clergy family are the symbolic parents of the congregation and represent that extended family to God and the community."⁴⁶ Lee explains that members of the congregation, therefore, keep a close watch on the clergy family, because the congregation sees them as models of Christian life for whom their wisdom, spirituality, marriage, and children should be emulated, while also looking for the flaws of the clergy family in order to feel better about having flaws themselves.⁴⁷

Another congregational stressor experienced by clergy parents is a lack of social support. Janelle Warner and John D. Carter at Rosemead School of Psychology, Biola University, conducted research in which they compared the quality of life for the clergy couples of a small Presbyterian denomination with non-clergy members of the same denomination, and the results of the 189 assessments, which were conducted on 33 pastors, 28 wives of pastors, 64 non-pastoral males and 64 non-pastoral females, "show that in a comparison of pastoral and non-

44. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 76.

45. Lee, *PK*, 44-5.

46. William Douglas, "Minister and Wife: Growth in Relationship," *Pastoral Psychology* 12 (December 1961): 38, cited in Cameron Lee, *PK: Helping pastors' Kids through Their Identity Crisis* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992), 46.

47. Lee, *PK*, 46-7.

pastoral males and females, loneliness, burnout and diminished marital adjustment are experienced more by those individuals functioning in a pastoral role.”⁴⁸ Hypothesizing a plausible causality of the loneliness, burnout, and diminished marital adjustment experienced by those in clergy roles, Warner and Carter say,

Due to the extent of the role demands of the pastorate, it appears that the husband/pastor becomes heavily committed and involved with his work. Out of necessity, his wife offers role support but must also assume additional responsibilities, resulting in emotional exhaustion. . . . The pastor and his wife consequently spend less time together because of the demands of their efforts in Christian service. Subsequently, they may begin to psychologically withdraw from each other and from friendships due to burnout; he being overly involved and she being emotionally exhausted. As a result, they experience loneliness and less marital satisfaction.⁴⁹

Although they admit their findings may be reflective of individuals underreporting loneliness due to a desire to maintain a positive appearance, Warner and Carter’s research found that

- 22% of pastors and 48% of pastors’ wives listed a lack of in-depth sharing with other church couples
- 56% of pastors’ wives had no close friends in the church
- Many of the conflicts and struggles for pastors’ wives are due to intense loneliness
- Loneliness is significantly correlated with marital and living situations
- Loneliness is negatively correlated with childhood intimacy and personal religious commitment.⁵⁰

Brian & Cara Croft, in their book, entitled, *The Pastor’s Family: Shepherding Your Family through the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, say, “The only person lonelier than a pastor in a church may be the pastor’s wife.”⁵¹

48. Janelle Warner and John D. Carter, “Loneliness, marital adjustment and burnout in pastoral and lay persons,” *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 12, no. 2 (Sum 1984): 125-131.

49. Warner and Carter, “Loneliness, marital adjustment and burnout in pastoral and lay persons,” 126.

50. Warner and Carter, “Loneliness, marital adjustment and burnout in pastoral and lay persons,” 129.

51. Brian Croft and Cara Croft, *The Pastor’s Family: Shepherding Your Family through the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2013), 41.

To better understand how the lack of social support affects clergy parents, Paul H. Wright and Tegan Blackbird investigated the effects of the “box on a pedestal” phenomenon in their study, entitled, “Pastors’ Friendships, Part 2: The Impact of Congregational Norms.”⁵² Wright and Blackbird reported that the comments received by pastors during problem-oriented group discussions and semi-structured interviews revealed factors that may serve as impediments to clergy members’ ability to develop and maintain close friendships:

On the one hand, pastors reported feeling boxed in by norms of propriety, that is, their parishioners’ highly restrictive expectations about ways in which pastors should and should not behave. On the other hand, they reported feeling that they were put on a pedestal as God’s representatives in such a way that laypersons tend to be cautious and inhibited in the presence of a pastor and hence fail to behave spontaneously or express themselves freely.⁵³

In contrast to their initial findings, which were based on the previous works of other well-respected researchers, Wright and Blackbird concluded that the congregations they studied showed no indications of directly encouraging or discouraging the development of close friendships for their pastors; to the contrary, their research showed evidence of indirect, but active, congregational support for the formation of such friendships.⁵⁴ Therefore, Wright and Blackbird explain that, according to their research

Pastors do not experience actual deficits in friendships relative to laymen of comparable status. Rather, being the kinds of persons who desire especially close personal relationships (cf. Ekhardt & Goldsmith, 1984⁵⁵), pastors experience such deficits relative

52. Paul H. Wright and Tegan Blackbird, “Pastors’ Friendships, Part 2: The Impact of Congregational Norms,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 14, no. 1 (January 1986): 29-41.

53. Wright and Blackbird, “Pastors’ Friendships, Part 2,” 30.

54. Wright and Blackbird, “Pastors’ Friendships, Part 2,” 39.

55. B. N. Ekhardt & W. M. Goldsmith, “Personality factors of men and women pastoral candidates, part 1: Motivational profiles,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 12, no. 2 (January 1984): 109-118.

to the kinds of friendships they would like to have. However, as Ross (1977)⁵⁶ emphasized in his discussion of the false consensus effect, individuals have a tendency to regard their own behavior and experience as more typical than it actually is. Such a tendency would lead pastors to see their own desired levels of friendships as no different from those of people in general, and hence to regard any deficits as “actual” rather than merely perceived.⁵⁷

Therefore, the lack of meaningful friendships in the lives of clergy parents, according to Wright and Blackbird, is likely the result of perceptions derived by clergy parents’ “naïve psychology,” as Lee Ross calls it.⁵⁸ As Ross explains in his “attribution theory,”⁵⁹ if a distortion of judgment causes clergy parents to misinterpret their less than ideal friendships as meaningless or absent friendships, their misinterpretations can result in maladaptive behavior, which will likely have negative effects on the rest of the clergy family.⁶⁰

Stressors associated with ministry, Lee and Balswick agree, affect not only the clergy parents; they indirectly and directly affect the children of clergy parents as well.⁶¹ In their research, Wilson and Darling conclude that the children of clergy experienced the same stressors as their clergy parents, although they experience them from a different perspective.⁶² Wilson and Darling also state that adults often make the false assumption that the children of clergy are able

56. Leonard Berkowitz, ed., *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology: Volume 10* (New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press, 1977), 173-220.

57. Wright and Blackbird, “Pastors’ Friendships, Part 2,” 39-40.

58. Berkowitz, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 174.

59. “Attribution theory, in its broadest sense, is concerned with the attempts of ordinary people to understand the causes and implications of the events they witness. It deals with the ‘naïve psychology’ of the ‘man in the street’ as he interprets his own behaviors and the actions of others.” Berkowitz, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 174.

60. Berkowitz, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 173-181.

61. Berkowitz, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 15.

62. Cynthia B. Wilson and Carol A. Darling, “Understanding Stress and Life Satisfaction for Children of Clergy: A Retrospective Study,” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 1 (Feb 2017): 130.

to endure clergy family expectations without complaining, because, as the assumption goes, clergy children are uniquely able to endure stress.⁶³ Fortunately, there is some good news regarding the congregational expectations. Rowatt's research identified congregational expectations as a less influential stressor than previously reported by earlier research, stating, "It appears that expectations from the church are not as demanding. Whether this is the case or not, the clergy and their spouses perceive less pressure."⁶⁴

Salvation Army clergy parents, like clergy parents of other Christian denominations, are susceptible to congregational stressors, including boundary intrusions and lack of social support. Sadly, these stressors are sometimes imposed upon Salvation Army clergy parents by fellow Salvation Army clergy, especially when the congregation they lead includes retired officers⁶⁵ or Headquarters officers.⁶⁶ There are occasions when other officers, although sometimes well-meaning, can disturb the clergy family's boundaries with unrealistic expectations and cause a great deal of stress on the clergy parents and their children. This can be particularly problematic for clergy parents when Headquarters officers are the source of their stress, because Headquarters officers are those relied upon by Salvation Army clergy, who are serving in pastoral⁶⁷ appointments, not only for leadership and guidance, but Headquarters officers also

63. Wilson and Darling, "Understanding Stress and Life Satisfaction for Children of Clergy: A Retrospective Study," 130.

64. Rowatt, "Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families," 530.

65. An officer is an ordained clergy of The Salvation Army.

66. Headquarters officers are ordained clergy of The Salvation Army, who are serving as administrative leaders of a Division, which may include one or multiple States, a Territory, which includes multiple states, for example, the Southern Territory of The Salvation Army in the U.S. encompasses 13 southeastern states.

67. Officers, who are serving as congregational pastors in The Salvation Army are referred to as corps officers and field officers. A "corps" is the name The Salvation Army uses to refer to a Salvation Army church, which includes a congregation and all the weekly programs and services that are typical of an Evangelical congregational setting.

conduct the clergy parents' annual reviews and have influence over the clergy parents' future appointments.

Although retired Salvation Army officers do not typically represent a threat to the clergy parents' position or future appointments, there are some who can present challenges to the emotional well-being of clergy parents, due to their own strongly held and defended traditions, biases, and expectations for how they believe Salvation Army clergy should lead the congregation, conduct their various forms of ministry, and raise their children.

There are also other members of Salvation Army congregations that can pose difficulties to clergy parents. For example, there is the susceptibility of boundary intrusion in which expectations placed on clergy children by the congregation interfere with clergy parenting, because some parishioners expect that all clergy children, living in the Salvation Army's parsonage,⁶⁸ will join their parents in attending all church activities and programs, regardless of scheduling conflicts, family decisions about the children's church participation, or age of the children.

The Organization

As a result of denominational polity, the organization in which clergy parents are employed and serve as pastors and ministers can be a source of external influences that present multiple, work-related stressors in the lives of clergy families, causing clergy parents to experience additional difficulties in their role as facilitators of spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. One of the external, work-related stressors that the organization can instill on clergy parents is the issue of mobility. Morris and Blanton (1998) identified mobility as one of

68. Maintaining consistency in its quasi-military structure and lingo, The Salvation Army refers to the parsonage as the "officer's quarters." An "officer" is the title used to refer to a Salvation Army ordained clergy member.

the five stressors that affect clergy parents' family functioning competency,⁶⁹ and Morris and Blanton (1994) found that "The mobility stressor reflects the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive adjustments associated with the relocation process."⁷⁰ The source of mobility stress is a sense of vulnerability to organizational decisions, which are made on behalf of the clergy family and may or may not have the consent or well-being of the clergy family in mind.⁷¹ Morris and Blanton conclude that frequent relocations or moves:

- Undermine opportunities for establishing social support networks
- Create greater role demands
- Interrupt personal growth and development
- Contribute to marital and family dysfunction.⁷²

Charlene Anderson and Carolyn Stark's research, entitled, "Psychosocial Problems of Job Relocation: Preventive Roles in Industry," revealed that corporate employees that experience repeated job relocation, exhibit stress symptoms that J. Marshall and C. L. Cooper call "mobility syndrome."⁷³ The symptoms of mobility syndrome include "depression, deterioration of health, little community involvement, strong dependency on the marital relationship for emotional satisfaction, a significant rate of alcoholism, pervasive feelings of social anonymity, diffusion of individual responsibility for social acts resulting in lack of involvement, destructive aggression,

69. Morris and Blanton, "Predictors of family functioning among clergy and spouses," 38.

70. Morris and Blanton, "The Influence of Word-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and their Wives," 189.

71. Morris and Blanton, "Predictors of family functioning among clergy and spouses," 38.

72. Morris and Blanton, "Predictors of family functioning among clergy and spouses," 38.

73. Judy Marshall and Cary L. Cooper, *Executives under Pressure: A Psychological Study* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Macmillan, 1979), cited in Charlene Anderson and Carolyn Stark, "Psychosocial Problems of Job Relocation: Preventive Roles in Industry," *Social Work* 33, no. 1 (Jan 1988): 38.

marital discord, and high divorce rate.”⁷⁴ It is also troubling to learn that family stressors, associated with frequent location, also include:

- Loss of support networks and valued persons and things (such as friendship groups or the family home)
- Acquisition of greater role burdens (a traditional example would be the wife covering for the husband while he moved ahead into a new job)
- Interruption of personal growth and development.⁷⁵

Although the stresses of mobility may not necessarily lead to dysfunction in a family, especially if transfers are less frequent, Anderson and Stark discovered that, even under benign conditions, “teenagers are predictably and adversely affected by geographical moves—they exhibit higher incidences of impaired social relationships and destructive acting out.”⁷⁶

Furthermore, Rowatt’s research revealed that, although clergy families may experience ready acceptance from their new congregation, schools and community activities may prove more difficult for the clergy family members.⁷⁷ As Rowatt explains, “Children who are moved two or more times between the ages of ten and eighteen are at higher risk for dysfunctional behavior.”⁷⁸ Still, Anderson and Stark’s study shows that managing stress and crises is significantly affected by a family’s individual personality characteristics, as well as their financial, educational, and health resources.⁷⁹

Salvation Army clergy parents are continually susceptible to the stressor of mobility, because, like some other denominations, the polity of The Salvation Army includes a culture of

74. Anderson and Stark, “Psychosocial Problems of Job Relocation,” 38.

75. Anderson and Stark, “Psychosocial Problems of Job Relocation,” 38.

76. Anderson and Stark, “Psychosocial Problems of Job Relocation,” 38.

77. Rowatt, “Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families,” 533.

78. Rowatt, “Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families,” 533.

79. Anderson and Stark, “Psychosocial Problems of Job Relocation,” 38.

itinerancy in which the clergy are appointed by the organization. Without prior knowledge or participation of any kind, regarding where they will be relocating, Salvation Army clergy expect the average appointment time to last approximately three years. This causes a great deal of stress on clergy families with children, who are given little to no consideration regarding the abrupt, geographic change.

Another external stressor that is imposed on clergy parents by the organization is high expectations. Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick surveyed clergy families to find out what they considered the greatest disadvantages of being in ministry, and they found that the two most frequently cited responses had to do with experiencing unrealistic expectations and not having enough family time.⁸⁰ The expectations of clergy parents usually mean the ministry and administrative schedules fill the times of the week when most families invest in family time, which are evenings and weekends.⁸¹ Furthermore, clergy families do not only receive unrealistic expectations from their congregation; they also receive them from their denominational leaders. Morris and Blanton's research revealed that denominations emphasize an atmosphere of competition and success, just like secular companies, and the desire to climb the ecclesial ladder causes many clergy to become workaholics.⁸² With so many expectations on the time, energy, and consciences of clergy parents, neglecting parenting responsibilities, including the facilitation of spiritual maturity in their children, can become a dangerous habit within clergy families. The risk of such neglect is that children can begin to develop resentment and bitterness toward Christians and God.⁸³

80. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 191.

81. Lee and Balswick, *Life in A Glass House*, 191.

82. Morris and Blanton, "Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses," 39.

83. Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 114.

Salvation Army clergy families know the experience of high expectations as well as any pastors. Not only are Salvation Army clergy expected to maintain and increase all the weekly ministries (e.g., worship planning, preaching, Sunday school, youth programs, and weekly Bible studies and prayer meetings), provide pastoral care for congregational members, and facilitate weddings and funerals, but they are also expected to maintain and increase social and financial support from the community where they serve. This includes developing, cultivating, and leading an advisory board, participating in local volunteer organizations, like Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, developing ongoing relationships with local leaders of business and government, and cultivating opportunities to share their needs and activities in print, radio, and television news broadcasts. The administrative responsibilities of Salvation Army clergy members is also daunting, as they include requirements for supervising employees and volunteers, providing social services that include financial assistance for living expenses, food, emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and other services that provide for hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of people in need every month, being responsible for capital projects and property upkeep of multiple buildings and locations, serving as the chief operating officers of thrift stores, keeping up with Headquarters' requirement of numerous, monthly statistical reports, and leaving the appointment for multiple weeks per year to attend and participate in disaster services, officers councils, summer camp, and youth retreats, which not only take clergy parents out of their home but also require Salvation Army clergy parents to be out of their city. All these expectations add immediate challenges to Salvation Army clergy parents' ability to give spiritual care to their own children.

Many researchers found that compensation also serves as a source of work-related stress for many clergy members. G. Wade Rowatt's study reveals that, although ministers are in the top

ten percent of educated citizens, in a list of 432 occupations, clergy pay is ranked at 316.⁸⁴ In the same study, Rowatt discovered that forty-two percent of ministers and fifty percent of clergy spouses listed low compensation as a disadvantage, which serves as a significant source of stress.⁸⁵ Morris and Blanton concluded that financial compensation is a chronic stressor for many clergy families, and that “95% of all clergy are underpaid, given their educational level.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, Morris and Blanton’s research concluded that the clergy profession can be considered a “two-person career,” which assumes the spouse of the clergy member will serve as an unpaid assistant pastor.⁸⁷ The damage caused to clergy families as a result of low compensation also affects the children.

Salvation Army clergy parents experience the stressors of minimal compensation in ways that are like clergy parents of other denomination; however, the compensation stressor also poses some unique challenges to Salvation Army clergy parents. For example, all Salvation Army clergy families are required to live in the parsonage, called the quarters, provided in each appointment. The quarters, including all furniture, bedding, cookware, dinnerware, and linens, belong to The Salvation Army. Furthermore, the automobiles used by Salvation Army clergy are also owned by The Salvation Army. With such amenities, the compensation is quite generous; however, when coupled with a minimal salary, called an allowance, these provisions can also increase the level of stress for clergy families, should the need to resign from their clergy position arise. Sometimes, there is the feeling of being trapped by benefits, when Salvation Army

84. Rowatt, “Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families,” 530-1.

85. Rowatt, “Stress and Satisfaction in Ministry Families,” 531.

86. Morris and Blanton, “The Influence of Word-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and their Wives,” 189.

87. Morris and Blanton, “The Influence of Word-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and their Wives,” 193.

clergy families are met with a crisis that requires a temporary or permanent change of vocation. Knowing all that would have to be purchased, from silverware to transportation, many Salvation Army clergy parents struggle with high levels of stress far longer than they would if the monetary compensation of officership enabled them to accumulate their own transportation and household goods, which would give them the needed flexibility to care for their families when the level of a crisis makes it necessary to find employment elsewhere. When Salvation Army clergy do resign, they often face the reality that they may not be able to immediately meet the living standard provided by The Salvation Army, which adds to the stress of their children who have often grown accustomed to what is equivalent to a middle-class existence.

There are many other external, work-related stressors related to the clergy role that add difficulty to clergy parents' Scriptural mandate to lead their children to follow Jesus. Recognizing these stressors and understanding how to prevent them from resulting in the neglect of their children's spiritual formation is critically important for all clergy parents.

Internal Influences

Researchers have recognized that, beyond the external work-related stressors that impede clergy parents' need to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, there are also many internal influences related to the role of clergy that also affect clergy parents' ability to effectively guide their children's spiritual growth process. These internally influenced, work-related stressors include challenges to clergy parents' emotional and spiritual well-being.

Emotional Well-being

Clergy parents' emotional well-being is an important aspect of their spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of their children. In his book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero insists that "Christian spirituality, without an integration of emotional health, can be deadly—to

yourself, your relationship with God, and the people around you.”⁸⁸ Todd Hall’s research concluded that, like other human service professionals, the foundation of a pastor’s effectiveness is their own emotional maturity and stability, and pastors whose emotional well-being is underdeveloped can harm their parishioners.⁸⁹ For clergy parents, a lack of emotional well-being can also cause harm to their children.

The first challenge to clergy parents’ emotional well-being that we will discuss is that which is described as a theoretical concept and the cornerstone of Dr. Murray Bowen’s family systems theory, called, “differentiation of self.”⁹⁰ “The differentiation of self,” Bowen states, “is roughly equivalent to the concept of emotional maturity,”⁹¹ and “defines people according to the degree of fusion, or differentiation, between emotional and intellectual functioning.”⁹² Those who are least differentiated allow their emotions to determine their actions, because their emotions dominate their lives.⁹³ Further describing those who are least differentiated, Bowen says, “These are the people who are less flexible, less adaptable, and more emotionally dependent on those about them. They are easily stressed into dysfunction, and it is difficult for them to recover from dysfunction. They inherit a high percentage of all human problems.”⁹⁴

88. Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 7.

89. Todd W. Hall, “The Personal Functioning of Pastors: A Review of Empirical Research with Implications for the Care of Pastors,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 247.

90. Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1993), 210.

91. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 210.

92. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 285.

93. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 285.

94. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 285.

At the other end of the scale of differentiation, Bowen says those who are more differentiated are able to retain a relative level of separation between their emotional and intellectual functioning, which allows them to be “more flexible, more adaptable, and more independent of the emotionality about them” in times of stress.⁹⁵

The level of an individual’s differentiation, Bowen states, is determined by

- The level of differentiation of one’s parents
- The type of relationship the child has with the parents
- The way one’s unresolved emotional attachment to his parents is handled in young adulthood.⁹⁶

These same parental influences of differentiation in children are no different for the children of clergy parents. “The three areas in which ‘undifferentiation’ is absorbed in a nuclear family⁹⁷ are marital conflict, sickness or dysfunction in a spouse, and projection to one or more children.”⁹⁸ Bowen describes projection as a pattern used by undifferentiated parents to “project their immaturity to one or more of their children.”⁹⁹

Undifferentiated clergy parents “live with,” as Lee and Balswick say, “a deep-seated sense of instability and insecurity.”¹⁰⁰ They also warn that

Parents who are not secure themselves will often pass this insecurity on to their children, unconsciously interfering with the children’s differentiation. This can be readily seen in the way parents respond to two of the most commonly frustrating periods of their lives as a family: when the children are in their “terrible twos,” and when they become teenagers.

95. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 285.

96. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 210.

97. Bowen defines the nuclear family as a mother, father, and children. Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 203.

98. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 398.

99. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 210.

100. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 34-5.

What is at stake in both cases is the child's ability to distinguish himself from his parents.¹⁰¹

The ability to differentiate from one's family of origin is important for the development of children; hence, Jack and Judith Balswick's explanation that "The goal of differentiation is to develop a clear sense of self that enables one to relate to and interact with others in interdependent ways."¹⁰² Therefore, if clergy parents mimetically instill a low level of differentiation in their children, their children are at risk of lacking the solid sense of self needed to live faithful Christian lives, especially in settings and with people that are opposed to or unwelcoming to the Christian message.

Another challenge to emotional well-being that clergy parents experience, which can reduce their effective facilitation of spiritual maturity in their children, is the desire for significance. In their research, Ellison and Matilla write that most clergy, whether consciously or unconsciously, experience being cast into the role of what the authors call the "spiritual superstar," because of the congregational need to have a model Christian leader.¹⁰³ However, the researchers also discovered that clergy members' own unrealistic expectations was a significant factor in their most frequent problems,¹⁰⁴ further concluding that "Christian leaders will find themselves caught up in a whirlwind of activity in a continual effort to satiate these internal expectations and desires."¹⁰⁵ Brian and Cara Croft write that a desire for significance can cause

101. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 35.

102. Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective On the Contemporary Home*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 32.

103. Craig W. Ellison and William S. Matilla, "The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 33.

104. Ellison and Matilla, "The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States," 33.

105. Ellison and Matilla, "The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States," 33-4.

clergy, who are discouraged by perceptions of ministry failure and an ineffective family life, to neglect their family by prioritizing church responsibilities above the needs of family.¹⁰⁶ Clergy parents who struggle with a desire for significance can develop a need to be needed that is fueled by insecurity and can result in clergy parents' insisting they do all meaningful ministry and church business themselves; therefore, they prioritize the needs of the church above the needs of their family, which Croft and Croft say, "eventually leads to two common results: burnout and family neglect."¹⁰⁷

A third challenge to the emotional well-being of clergy parents' that influences their ability to facilitate their children's spiritual formation has to do with "parenting style." In the work of Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, and Dornbusch, entitled, "Patterns of Competence and Adjustment among Adolescents from Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful Families," the authors describe four parenting styles:

- Authoritative (in which parents were both firm and supportive)
- Directive (in which parents were firm and directive but relatively less supportive, comparable to our "authoritarian")
- Democratic (in which parents were supportive but not directive, comparable to our "indulgent")
- Unengaged (in which parents were relatively low in both support and firm control, comparable to our "neglectful").¹⁰⁸

The results of their study show that children raised by parents with authoritative and indulgent parenting styles are more confident and display less psychological distress. However, their study also show that children raised in authoritative and authoritarian homes display less problem

106. Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 37-8.

107. Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 38.

108. Susie D. Lamborn et al., "Patterns of Competence and Adjustment among Adolescents from Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful Families," *Child Development*, 62, No. 5 (Oct. 1991), 1050.

behavior, suggesting that strictness and supervision is a deterrent to behavioral problems in children.¹⁰⁹

In their book, *Life in a Glass House*, Lee and Balswick refer to two studies that relate parenting styles and religious commitments of children, in which one study¹¹⁰ concluded that children raised by inconsistent, authoritarian parents feel less committed to their parents' religion, and the second study¹¹¹ concluded that children raised by warm, supportive parents are more likely to share their parents' religious commitments.¹¹² As a result of their research, Lee and Balswick explain that the spiritual formation of children depends on effective parenting.¹¹³

In his article, entitled, "Perspectives on the family from the standpoint of faith development theory," James Fowler states,

Faith is a relational matter. As we relate to the conditions of our existence with acts of interpretive commitment we do so as persons also related to and co-involved with companions whom we trust and to whom we are loyal. This means that the interpretative images by which we make sense of the conditions of our lives inevitably implicate our companions. It also means, reciprocally, that our experiences with these companions in interpretation have decisive impact on the forming and reforming of our interpretative images and for the values and powers they serve.¹¹⁴

However, the parental influence of children's faith can also be affected by the age of the child, according to the research of Stephen Arnet, entitled, "Religious Socialization and Identity

109. Lamborn et al., "Patterns of Competence and Adjustment among Adolescents from Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful Families," 1063.

110. Roger Louis Dudley, "Alienation from Religion in Adolescents From Fundamentalist Religious Homes," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 17, no. 4 (Dec. 1978), 389-98.

111. Martin A. Johnson, "Family Life and Religious Commitment," *Review of Religious Research*, 14, no. 3 (Spring 1973), 144-50.

112. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 167.

113. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 167.

114. James W. Fowler, "Perspectives on the family from the standpoint of faith development theory," in *Christian Perspectives on Faith Development*, eds. J. Astley and L. Francis, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 329.

Formation of Adolescents in High Tension Religions,” in which he recognizes the stronger influence of friendship networks on the development of religiosity in adolescents and the stronger influence of parents on the religiosity of young adults, although, Armet shows, parents continue to serve as the primary influencers on the shaping of their children’s religiosity.¹¹⁵

Affirming the influence of relationships on individual faith, the research of Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, in their study, entitled, “Finding Faith, Losing Faith: The Prevalence and Context of Religious Transformation during Adolescence,” posited that the parenting style and quality of the parent-child relationship influence the active participation by, and importance of, faith in the lives of their adolescent children.¹¹⁶ Parenting style, write Regnerus and Uecker, may have a positive effect on their adolescent children’s religious service attendance when the children experience personal autonomy from their parents, while more rigid controlling efforts by parents who force their adolescent children to attend religious services may cause adolescent children to reject organized religion.¹¹⁷

In their research, entitled, “The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families,” Carol Anderson Darling, Lenore M. McWey, and E. Wayne Hill, in which the researchers’ purpose is to understand how the presence or absence of children effects the quality of life in clergy families, warn that “Clergy are at the forefront in times of personal, familial, and community stress.”¹¹⁸ The authors of this study also found that vocations and professions that require work with or

115. Stephen Armet, “Religious Socialization and Identity Formation of Adolescents in High Tension Religions,” *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 3 (Mar 2009): 291.

116. Mark D. Regnerus and Jeremy E. Uecker, “Finding Faith, Losing Faith: The Prevalence and Context of Religious Transformation during Adolescence,” *Review of Religious Research* 47, no. 3 (Mar 2006): 233.

117. Regnerus and Uecker, “Finding Faith, Losing Faith,” 233.

118. Carol Anderson Darling, Lenore M. McWey, and E. Wayne Hill, “The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families,” *Journal of Family Issues* 27, no. 4 (April 2006): 439.

around trauma, including clergy and health care workers, experience compassion fatigue and secondary traumatic stress, which is a consequence of having to act with compassion while being in harm's way, which "can result in psychological and physical distress, as well as impairment of family relationships . . ." ¹¹⁹ Fortunately, the research also shows that many of those who work in trauma do quite well as a result of "positive resources and good social support," which can create an inverse relationship between compassion fatigue and compassion satisfaction. ¹²⁰ The results of their study indicated that higher levels of stress existed in clergy homes where children were present. ¹²¹

Certainly, there are other internal stressors that affect the emotional well-being of clergy parents, and, therefore, affect their ability to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. Clergy parents, like all parents, are subject to emotional weaknesses that can hinder their effectiveness as disciplers in their homes. No parent is flawless, and clergy parents, although they may have more theological training and Christian leadership practice, are just as susceptible to the effects of emotional challenges as any other parent. As Cameron Lee writes, "Clergy parents can be physically home for much of the day, but emotionally absent." ¹²² Because clergy parents are expected to model what their children hear them teach, it is important for them to be aware of the dangers of internal stressors, such as emotional challenges, not only for the integrity of their ministry with the members of their congregation, but also for the integrity of their ministry with their children at home. However, as the authors concluded,

119. Darling, McWey, and Hill, "The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families," 440.

120. Darling, McWey, and Hill, "The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families," 440.

121. Darling, McWey, and Hill, "The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families," 441.

122. Lee, *PK*, 137.

The paradox of children in clergy homes was evident in that, overall, the quality of life was similar for clergy families with and without children in the home. Although life may be more complex and conflictual with children in the home, it may also be more meaningful and rewarding and thus counterbalance the physiological and psychological stress and facilitate a quality of life similar to those clergy without children.¹²³

Finally, Darling, McWey, and Hill also found that compassion fatigue also holds a paradoxical perspective due to the stress of compassion fatigue being countered by the realization that raising children provides meaning and purpose, which results in compassion satisfaction.¹²⁴

Spiritual Well-being

In addition to the effects that work-related stressors have on the emotional well-being of clergy parents and their ability to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, work-related stressors also affect the spiritual well-being of clergy parents. Within the research of Jean Proeschold-Bell et al., entitled, “Closeness to God Among Those Doing God’s Work: A Spiritual Well-Being Measure for Clergy,” in which 1,513 United Methodist Clergy were surveyed, the researchers discovered that, although earlier researchers believed the spiritual well-being of clergy members does not need to be studied, because their ministerial roles and religious activities automatically bolster their spiritual well-being, the empirical evidence does not support such assumptions.¹²⁵ Proeschold-Bell et al. further report that studies, previous to their own, discovered that “notable numbers of clergy experience intrapsychic struggle and chronic religious doubting, and they found only limited support for the stress-buffering role of religious resources among clergy.” Therefore, like all clergy, clergy parents are susceptible to internal

123. Darling, Lenore McWey, and Hill, “The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families,” 459.

124. Darling, Lenore McWey, and Hill, “The Paradox of Children in Clergy Families,” 460.

125. Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, “Closeness to God Among Those Doing God’s Work: A Spiritual Well-Being Measure for Clergy,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 53, no. 3 (June 2014): 880.

stressors that include challenges to their spiritual well-being that can influence the effectiveness of the discipleship goals they have for their children.

The first challenge to clergy parents' spiritual well-being that we will discuss is hypocrisy, i.e., they do not practice at home that which they preach at church. Cameron Lee emphasizes how important it is for clergy parents to live the faith they teach, writing, "If parents want their children to develop strong spiritual identities, they must be both consistent Christians and good parents. This means, first, that pastors must practice what they preach."¹²⁶ Lee further states, "Even if the pastor is not flagrantly hypocritical at home, he may nevertheless fail to imbue the home with the reality of faith in everyday life. Without this demonstration, the PK¹²⁷ has much less than is needed on which to build a spiritual identity."¹²⁸ Marjorie Thompson affirms Lee's assertion, insisting that professional ministers and church leaders are aware that they will have minimal effect on a child's spiritual development if Christian nurturing is not happening in the home.¹²⁹ Martin Johnson's research also revealed that children receive religious values through observing parental behavior and through family interaction.¹³⁰

Chap Bettis refers to the hypocritical parent as "The Pharisaical Parent,"¹³¹ and he goes on to remind parents, who consider it a ridiculous thought that they could be living in hypocrisy, that

126. Lee, *PK*, 143.

127. Pastor's Kid.

128. Lee, *PK*, 144.

129. Thompson, *Family*, 26-7.

130. Martin A. Johnson, "Family Life and Religious Commitment," *Review of Religious Research*, 14 no. 3 (Spring 1973): 150.

131. Bettis, *The Disciple-Making Parent*, 42.

All of us are tempted to:

- Point out the speck in our children or spouse's eyes while unaware of the log in our own.
- Act and speak differently in secret when only our children see us.
- Think of ourselves as mature, while assuming it's our children and spouse who need a Savior.
- Focus on looking good on the outside and ignore fighting sin on the inside.
- Focus only on outward obedience rather than the heart-changing grace that all of us need.¹³²

The spiritual challenge of hypocrisy is dangerous for clergy parents, just as it is for all parents, because, as Christian Smith's study shows, "a lot of research in the sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents."¹³³ However, as Marjorie Thompson insists, in this life, there are no perfect Christian families or perfect Christians, which is a message the church needs to communicate.¹³⁴ Thompson continues by reminding her readers that all people (which includes clergy parents) are earthen vessels filled with flaws and are often broken.¹³⁵ Therefore, the hypocrisy that most negatively influences clergy parents' facilitation of spiritual maturity in their children is not simply the act of not practicing what they preach, but the hypocrisy that Chap Bettis calls "true hypocrisy." "True hypocrisy," Bettis explains, "is not falling short of the high commands of Christ. Faith-killing, scorn-inducing hypocrisy is falling short and not repenting of it. It is not caring that we are lukewarm. It is being unwilling to admit we are complacent about following hard after the Lord." When the children of clergy parents

132. Bettis, *The Disciple-Making Parent*, 42.

133. Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56.

134. Thompson, *Family*, 41.

135. Thompson, *Family*, 41.

witness hypocrisy in their parents' lives, the spiritual formation of the children suffers.¹³⁶ As Joe Trull and James Carter assert, "The common spiritual disciplines that ministers recommend to others must become their practices if their lives are to ring true."¹³⁷ After all, as Kenda Dean insists, "In the end, awakening faith does not depend on how hard we press young people to love God, but on how much we show them that we do."¹³⁸

Another challenge to clergy parents' spiritual well-being is what Michael Horton calls "Christless Christianity."¹³⁹ Horton describes Christless Christianity as America's overarching form of Christianity that "has simply become trivial, sentimental, affirming, and irrelevant."¹⁴⁰ The heralds of Christless Christianity no longer talk about sin; they have replaced the interest in truth with an interest in therapy; and their focus is on consumers instead of disciples.¹⁴¹ Horton's definition of Christless Christianity cites the research of sociologist Christian Smith, who calls the new American version of religion "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism," which includes the following five-point creed:

1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.¹⁴²

136. Lee, *PK*, 175.

137. Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2004), 70.

138. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 120.

139. Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*, Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012).

140. Horton, *Christless Christianity*, 21.

141. Horton, *Christless Christianity*, 35-40.

142. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162-3.

It is this Christless version of American Christianity, which, Smith concludes, is the practiced faith of most American youth and is also practiced “within the structures of at least some Christian organizations and institutions.”¹⁴³ Clergy parents, who have succumbed to the faith of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, are, like many American adults,¹⁴⁴ modeling and passing on to their children a Christless Christianity and a diminished form of spiritual well-being, which is absent of Christ-centered love, sacrificial living, and Holy Spirit transformation.¹⁴⁵

Salvation Army clergy are susceptible to some of the lures of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, because of the pressures associated with The Salvation Army’s evangelistic expectations and requirements placed on officers. According to Michael Horton, Wesleyan-Armenian¹⁴⁶ theology, the theology to which The Salvation Army subscribes, includes a semi-Pelagian¹⁴⁷ belief that salvation requires some human participation and effort in cooperation with God’s saving work.¹⁴⁸ John Wesley himself refuted such an understanding of his opponents, arguing that, as Kenneth Collins quotes, “some sinners will be lost simply because, as Wesley puts it, ‘they will not be saved.’ In other words, they stubbornly refuse what grace is offered. They will

143. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 171.

144. Smith and Denton assure their readers that the practice of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is not limited to teenagers but appears to be widely popular among many U.S. adults as well. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 166.

145. David P. Setran and Chris A. Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry* (Birmingham: Baker Academic, 2013), 29-32.

146. “Arminianism, named after a late sixteenth-century Dutch theologian who rejected Calvinism, was nevertheless one more step removed from Pelagian convictions, affirming the necessity of grace. Nevertheless, Arminianism still holds that salvation is a cooperative effort of God and human beings.” Horton, *Christless Christianity*, 44.

147. “Semi-Pelagians maintain that faith begins independently of God’s grace, although such grace is subsequently necessary for salvation, and that predestination is simply divine foreknowledge.” Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 107.

148. Horton, *Christless Christianity*, 44.

not come to the Savior so that they may have life.”¹⁴⁹ The ongoing requirement of Salvation Army clergy to primarily seek to secure converts is mentioned in the signed covenant of every officer prior to their commissioning and ordination, including the words, “I bind myself to Him in this solemn covenant: to love and serve Him supremely all my days, to live to win souls and make their salvation the first purpose of my life . . .” This commitment to “win souls” can cause some Salvation Army clergy to adopt a Pelagian or semi-Pelagian philosophy in their ministry, causing them to assume personal responsibility not only for obeying Christ’s Great Commission to make disciples, but also for making sure the disciples are made by relentlessly performing the most effective actions that will help to bring about the salvation of every person they serve in ministry. As an example of the requirement for Salvation Army officers to do whatever possible to “win souls,” a writer for an official website for The Salvation Army in Australia writes about the Founder and first General:

William Booth was a brave man, hard to the point of militancy yet soft enough to cry tears of compassion with those seeking answers to their spiritual quest or facing grief and bereavement. Booth worked tirelessly to bring Christ to people through the words of the gospel and Christian love in action. General Booth once said he would stand on his head and play a tambourine with his feet if it would bring people to God.”¹⁵⁰

Warning Christians about the danger of aggressive evangelism, Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, “Every attempt to impose the gospel by force, to run after people and proselytize them, to use our own resources to arrange the salvation of other people, is both futile and dangerous.”¹⁵¹

149. Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 31.

150. “William Booth,” The Salvation Army Australia Southern Territory, accessed January 18, 2019, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Who-We-Are/History-and-heritage/Salvation-Army-generals/William-Booth/>.

151. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 1959), 186.

The Salvation Army, like many Christian denominations in America, is struggling to maintain parishioners and to attract new lay leaders and clergy. Therefore, the pressure to be effective evangelistic pastors, which is measured by monthly statistical reports that include the number of seekers, converts, and program participants that are presented to Headquarters, can tempt some Salvation Army clergy to focus less on making disciples that are committed to Christ, and to focus more on practicing a Christless Christianity that enables visitors and parishioners to be comfortable and happy and gives the responsibility for their acceptance and appropriation of salvation to zealous clergy.

Salvation Army clergy parents who submit their spiritual well-being to the therapeutic, moralistic methods of Christless Christianity are facilitating spiritual immaturity in the lives of their children. Such children will grow up without knowing their need for the gospel of Christ; they will not consider the cost of discipleship, which includes sacrifice and self-denial; they will be unable to live by faith, and not by sight; and they will not be able to bear the spiritual fruit that results from life in Christ.¹⁵²

There are many other challenges to Salvation Army clergy parents' spiritual well-being, which effect their ability to facilitate spiritual maturity in their children. Awareness of these challenges is important for understanding how they inhibit the spiritual formation in the children of clergy parents as well as within clergy parents themselves. As Chap Bettis so poignantly states,

Child training is a misnomer. It's really parent training. Children are sent by God to make us more like Jesus. A child is God's sanctification machine, calling you to die to yourself daily. Children are a floodlight on the idols of the heart. Idols like comfort, looking good before others, control, success, or peace are all revealed by my little sinner!

152. Setran and Kiesling, *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood*, 37-44.

Parental Barriers

In this portion of this research, we will discuss a few notable barriers to facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of children of clergy parents. Clergy parents, like all parents, have the potential for presenting barriers of spiritual growth to their children. If parents hope to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children, they must, as Paul Tripp writes, start “with knowing who you are as a parent.”¹⁵³ Tripp further explains that parents are not owners of their children, who are motivated by what parents want for and from their children; they are ambassadors who want “what God in grace has planned to do through us in our children.”¹⁵⁴ Chap Bettis similarly writes, “In allowing us to create life and raise another human being, God has gifted us with an awe-inspiring privilege and responsibility. . . . God’s intent in giving you the privilege of creating new lives is for you to raise them to know and love him.”¹⁵⁵ As Paul Tripp explains, parents are ambassadors of Christ, sent on Christ’s behalf to faithfully represent God’s message, methods, and character to their children.¹⁵⁶

In their book, *Fearless Parenting*, George Barna and Jimmy Myers write about what they call two parental parasites that can drain the lifeblood out of a family.¹⁵⁷ The first parental barrier, referred to by Barna and Myers as a parental parasite, is parental anger, which can serve as a barrier to spiritual maturity by leaving lifelong, emotional scars, destroying parent/child

153. Paul David Tripp, *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016), 13.

154. Tripp, *Parenting*, 14-15.

155. Bettis, *The Disciple-Making Parent*, 4-5.

156. Tripp, *Parenting*, 14.

157. George Barna and Jimmy Myers, *Fearless Parenting: How to Raise Faithful Kids in a Secular Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2017), 118-19.

relationships, and negatively affecting the child's view of God.¹⁵⁸ As Barna and Hill explain, the behavior of parents effects their children's perception of Christ, because Christ is reflected through their parents.¹⁵⁹ Tedd Tripp explains the significance of "unholy anger" as the anger a parent expresses when not getting what they want from their child, which is an anger that "frames discipline as a problem between parent and child, not as a problem between the child and God," who is actually being disobeyed when the child disobeys the parent.¹⁶⁰ When clergy parents respond to their children with anger, they have begun to see their children as their enemy, and, as Paul Tripp writes, "they will fail to be effective and productive in those strategic moments of ministry in which God has placed them."¹⁶¹

The second parental barrier that we will discuss is that which Barna and Hill describe is the parental parasite of guilt and shame.¹⁶² In their book, entitled, *Shame and Guilt*, Tangney and Dearing cite empirical research, which shows the difference between shame and guilt as centering on the role of the self, that is, shame involves the negative self-evaluation of who a person is while guilt is the self-condemnation of something a person has done.¹⁶³ Writing from a theological perspective, Jamieson writes similarly of the distinction between shame and guilt, stating that the one dealing with shame finds the self to be inadequate and the one dealing with guilt, which is a far less painful experience than shame, negatively judges his or her particular

158. Barna and Myers, *Fearless Parenting*, 122.

159. Barna and Myers, *Fearless Parenting*, 122.

160. Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 2nd ed. (Wapwallowpen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2005), 29.

161. Paul David Tripp, *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), 32-33.

162. Barna and Myers, *Fearless Parenting*, 122.

163. June Price Tangney and Rhonda L. Dearing, *Shame and Guilt*, ed. Peter Salovey (New York, London: The Guilford Press, 2002), 24.

actions.¹⁶⁴ It is vitally important for clergy parents to understand that, as Jamieson also writes, “Guilt fears punishment; shame fears the loss of love.”¹⁶⁵ Therefore, clergy parents should remember that using the tool of shame on their children will likely cause the child to “feel the desire to run and hide by either literally leaving the shaming environment or averting their eyes from the source of the same,”¹⁶⁶ which is counter-productive to any parental goal of facilitating spiritual maturity in their children.

As models of Christ, clergy parents must use discipline to reconcile their children with their heavenly Father, and this is not accomplished using guilt and shame, which is a tool of the Enemy that pushes children “away from God while building shame and resentment—two feelings that quickly corrode relationships.”¹⁶⁷ In his book, *Parenting*, Paul Tripp says “Shame and guilt are power tools that parents use more frequently than we recognize.”¹⁶⁸ Shame and guilt is a power tool parents pull out when they want to control their children rather than help their children see their wrong and reach out for the help of their parents and Jesus.¹⁶⁹

The last parental barrier to facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of clergy children that we will discuss is legalism.¹⁷⁰ Grenz, Guretzki, and Nordling define religious legalism as that which “focuses on obedience to laws or moral codes based on the (misguided) assumption

164. Phillip D. Jamieson, *The Face of Forgiveness: A Pastoral Theology of Shame and Redemption* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 62.

165. Jamieson, *The Face of Forgiveness*, 62.

166. Jamieson, *The Face of Forgiveness*, 64.

167. Barna and Myers, *Fearless Parenting*, 124-125.

168. Tripp, *Parenting*, 67.

169. Tripp, *Parenting*, 68.

170. Also called moralism.

that such obedience is a means of gaining divine favor.”¹⁷¹ John Coe describes legalism as an expression of Christianity used by those who are not committed to discipleship and obedience to Christ, but are committed to using Christianity as a means of a good life in the present and insurance for the life to come.¹⁷² In his book, entitled, *The Pastor’s Kid*, Barnabas Piper writes, “Legalism creates false expectations. It is a false standard of holiness based on some extrabiblical standard, some man-made understanding of morality. And just like any false expectation, the inevitable result is disappointment.”¹⁷³ Piper continues by warning that legalism leads to an inability to reach the moral standard or even to figure out what the standard is supposed to be.¹⁷⁴ Because The Salvation Army is a denominational member of the Protestant, holiness branch of the Evangelical Church, it is not uncommon for some Salvation Army officers to confuse holiness with moralistic or legalistic expectations for themselves and their families. Rather than lead their children to the unmerited grace and unconditional love of Christ, it is tempting, because of the fear that their children will stray from Christ, to lead them to the laws of Scripture, not as a method of loving obedience to Jesus but as a means of legalistic expectations, which do more to frustrate their children who, like the clergy parents themselves, are unable to fully comply with the laws of Scripture, and they either succumb to a legalistic form of faith themselves or eventually reject the Christian faith altogether. This tendency is affirmed by Mike Minter, who writes, “We have lost our way when we confuse holiness with legalism, which has now taken over the western church. My great concern as a pastor is that those whom I shepherd,

171. Grenz, Guretzki, & Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 72.

172. John Coe, “Resisting the Temptation of Moral Formation: Opening to Spiritual Formation in the Cross and the Spirit,” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care* 1 no. 1 (2008): 55.

173. Barnabas Piper, *The Pastor’s Kid: Finding Your Own Faith and Identity* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2014), 47.

174. Piper, *The Pastor’s Kid*, 48.

as well as myself, can discern the difference.”¹⁷⁵ Anderson, Miller, and Travis warn: “Though the law of God is ‘holy and righteous and good’ (Romans 7:12), trying to keep it in order to be accepted by God is unholy, unrighteous, and not good at all. Man was never designed nor expected to keep God’s commands on his own, nor was strict adherence to law ever God’s way of making man righteous. It has always been by faith.”¹⁷⁶ A good method of resistance toward imparting legalism into the children of clergy parents is the practice of that which C. John Miller refers to as comprehensive forgiveness, of which he insists: “The constant practice of forgiveness leaves no room for self-righteousness.”¹⁷⁷ Legalistic clergy parents do well to remember that children, who see God as nothing more than an unrelenting judge and have no knowledge of the reality of God’s forgiveness through the atonement of Christ, “will be closed to his love.”¹⁷⁸

Conclusion

The facilitation of Christian spiritual formation begins in the family.¹⁷⁹ As Marjorie Thompson says, “It is virtually impossible to overestimate the importance of the family to a child’s total development.”¹⁸⁰ Going further, Thompson insists, “The family, more than any other context of life, is the foundational place of spiritual formation in its broad sense, especially for children.”¹⁸¹ Jack and Judith Balswick remind their readers that it is the responsibility of

175. Mike Minter, *A Western Jesus: The Wayward Americanization of Christ and the Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 189.

176. Neil T. Anderson, Rich Miller, and Paul Travis, *Breaking the Bondage of Legalism: When Trying Harder Isn't Enough* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 31.

177. C. John Miller and Barbara Miller Juliani, *Come Back, Barbara*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1997), 79.

178. Miller and Juliani, *Come Back, Barbara*, 59.

179. Thompson, *Family*, 19-20.

180. Thompson, *Family*, 20.

Christian parents to model the way to spiritual formation, writing, “Without question . . . parents are the ones who are directed to ‘train children in the right way’ (Prov. 22:6).”¹⁸² Furthermore, in their seminal book, entitled, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton advise their readers that parents are indispensable in the religious formation of youth.¹⁸³ Because parents hold such an influential role in the spiritual formation of their children, it is vitally important that clergy parents are aware of the ways in which occupational stressors can influence their lives, and, subsequently, influence their ability to facilitate spiritual maturity in their children.

Throughout their work, researchers come to similar conclusions regarding the occupational stressors that negatively influence clergy parents’ emotional, spiritual, and marital well-being, and that subsequently affect clergy parents’ facilitation of spiritual formation in the lives of their children. Researchers note the high expectations and excessive responsibilities that congregations, denominations, communities, and sometimes the clergy themselves place on the position of clergy, which can be detrimental to clergy parents’ ability to disciple their own children.

Yet, authors also note the positive influence of family strengths that enable families to remain healthy and functional even when experiencing stress and crises. After all, it is not a lack of suffering that results from Christian faithfulness, but the ability to continue trusting and imitating Christ during times of trouble that exemplifies the kind of faith that is to be emulated by the children of clergy parents. As Thomas McWilliams writes, “The best protection clergy

181. Thompson, *Family*, 22.

182. Jack O. Balswick and Judith K. Balswick, *The Family: A Christian Perspective On the Contemporary Home*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 146.

183. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

can have against the many problems associated with pastoral work is a true and vibrant spiritual walk with God, heavenly gifted wisdom, foreknowledge of the sources of ministerial dangers, and passion.”¹⁸⁴

Mulholland says, “Christian spiritual formation is the process of being conformed to the image of Christ,”¹⁸⁵ and James Wilhoite insists that “Spiritual formation is the intentional communal process of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸⁶ Therefore, clergy parents, whose primary pursuit in life is to become more like Christ, regardless of the struggles attributed to the life of ministers, are better equipped to teach their children to pursue the kind of life that Dallas Willard insists is the essential goal of humanity: “Genuine transformation of the whole person into the goodness and power seen in Jesus and his ‘Abba’ Father—the only transformation adequate to the human self—remains the necessary goal of human life.”¹⁸⁷

To be sure, clergy parents are not perfect parents and the children of clergy parents are not guaranteed spiritual maturity. It is the fallen nature of humanity that plagues clergy parents and their children, just as it plagues every human being. In his book, *Dangerous Calling*, Paul Tripp reminds all clergy of the reality of their less-than-perfect selves, saying, “Pastors, we’re all still a bit of a mess. We’re all at times very poor examples of the truths we teach. We all have the dark

184. Thomas W. McWilliams, “Member Care of Salvation Army Officers and Their Families” (doctor of ministry dissertation, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2012), 85.

185. M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Shaped by the Word: The Power of Scripture in Spiritual Formation* (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room, 1985), 28, quoted in Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, rev. and expanded ed., (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1996), 21.

186. James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 23, quoted in Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, *Spiritual Formation: A Wesleyan Paradigm* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2011), 13.

187. Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 20.

ability to expound a passage that lauds God’s grace yet be a husband or father of ungrace in the car on the way home.”¹⁸⁸ The mission of clergy parents, like all Christian parents, is to shepherd their children’s hearts and care for their children’s souls, which requires each parent to know their children well, so that they can “model the Wonderful Counselor, who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses and give us mercy and grace in our time of need . . .”¹⁸⁹

In this chapter, pertinent literature was reviewed to describe the work-related stressors that influence the lives of clergy parents and the effects that occupational stressors have on clergy parents’ ability to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. This review also shows how the spiritual formation of the children of clergy parents is influenced by the ways in which clergy parents respond to work-related stressors. Because the life of active clergy inherently includes external and internal challenges to the spiritual and emotional lives of clergy parents and their children, it is imperative that clergy parents and the organizations in which they serve are intentional and assertive in their pursuit to recognize and mitigate the effects of the occupational stressors that exist within the vocation of Christian ministry.

188. Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling (Paperback Edition): Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*, reprint ed. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 199-200.

189. Paul David Tripp, *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2001), 241-42.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research instrument used to explore the most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers was an online survey. Barker, Pistrang, and Elliott describe research as “demanding: it requires clear and rigorous thought, as well as perseverance and stamina, but it is also fascinating and exciting . . .”¹ In this chapter, a description is given of the online survey instrument, which was disseminated to active, retired, and a few former Salvation Army officers, who serve, or have served, throughout the Southeastern United States. The overarching goals of the online survey were to discover the primary, work-related stressors that are experienced by Salvation Army officers and their children, the spiritual disciplines that Salvation Army officer families regularly practice in their homes, and the mitigating factors that regularly practicing spiritual disciplines in the homes of officers might have on their children’s spiritual formation. Working with Dr. Bryan Auday², an online survey was developed, using SurveyMonkey’s³ online survey software, which included quantitative and qualitative questions. The instrument of an online survey was used because it

1. Chris Barker, Nancy Pistrang, and Robert Elliot, *Research Methods in Clinical Psychology: An Introduction for Students and Practitioners*, 3rd ed. (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 3.

2. Dr. Auday is the Research Methodology professor for the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

3. SurveyMonkey (surveymonkey.com) is an only survey software that is widely used for creating and running professional online surveys, including the dissemination, collection, and analysis of data, including access to custom reports and chart creation.

was the most effective tool for reaching the largest number of Salvation Army officers through the assistance of The Salvation Army's southern territorial⁴ leaders in Atlanta, Georgia.

Survey

Survey Goals

The initial goals for preparing the survey included:

- Preparing an instrument that would meet the purpose of the specific research while also securing the full cooperation of The Salvation Army's territorial leadership and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's IRB.
- Developing a reasonable amount of quantitative and qualitative questions that would encourage the participation of active, retired, and previous Salvation Army officers and would take the participants no more than 5 to 8 minutes to complete.
- Providing reassurance to the participants that the online survey is completely confidential, and that all participants will remain anonymous.
- Using the highest level of Christian integrity and fervent prayer regarding the collection and use of the survey results.
- Providing the Personnel Department of The Salvation Army's Southern Territory with an effective tool for helping Salvation Army officers facilitate spiritual maturity in their children.

Survey Development

Preparing a survey tool that would be fully accepted and supported by The Salvation Army's territorial leaders required the ability to demonstrate the usefulness and pertinence of the research. With the previously received support of The Salvation Army's Territorial Personnel Department, which included approval of entering Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program, and specifically the Ministry to Emerging Generations track, the topic of the thesis was already approved. The ongoing development of the thesis project included personal updates of the research to The Salvation Army's personnel department, which aided in cultivating openness and trust with The Salvation Army's territorial leadership, regarding the research project. As the survey instrument was being developed, every draft was sent to the

4. See Appendix A.

personnel department for their perusal and subsequent suggestions for changes or additions to the questions, which were based on The Salvation Army's interests and concerns for the spiritual development of the children of Salvation Army officers and the officers themselves. The result of the survey critiques and suggestions was an online survey instrument that satisfied The Salvation Army's southern territorial leaders and the goals of the research, which included The Salvation Army's personal department approval for the final draft of the survey.

Following the approval of The Salvation Army's territorial leadership in Atlanta, Georgia, the survey was sent to the Dean of the Doctor of Ministry program, Dr. David Currie, to be reviewed by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Approval from the IRB was quickly granted as a result of the survey being anonymous and not including the participation of anyone under the age of 18.

Survey Considerations

The considerations for effective survey research included the need for quantitative and qualitative questions that would preserve the goals for revealing the most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers. Survey questions that would maintain integrity for the specific research being studied included frank discussions between interested parties, each of which had legitimate concerns and hopes for the outcomes of the survey. The needs of each party were considered during the approval process while upholding the initial goals of the research. There were some suggestions made by those with a slightly different agenda for the research, which included wording the questions with a more positive approach that would not have effectively contributed to the goals of the research. Such suggestions required a great deal of diplomacy in the negotiation process in order to maintain the integrity of the research goals.

Another consideration for effective survey research was whether the survey would be developed for the participation of children of Salvation Army officers or for Salvation Army officer who are parents. The concerns for sending the survey to the children of Salvation Army officers included the considerations of age, e.g., should the survey be filled out by minors or adult children? Due to concerns for minors, especially considering those who may be undergoing a negative experience, currently, as Salvation Army officer children, the different parties involved in the survey development process decided that the goals of the research would be most effectively gained by developing the survey for the participation of Salvation Army officers who are parents.

An additional consideration for creating an online instrument that would result in effective survey research had to do with the form of the questions, which included the opportunity for the survey participants to provide demographic information that identified them as clergy parents, including the number of years they have served as Salvation Army officers, and the opportunity for the survey participants to elaborate on their responses to open-ended questions and those formatted using the Likert scale. Although the option to provide written responses required more time to categorize responses, the insight gained would provide more details that could be invaluable to the overall results of the study.

The final consideration for creating an online survey that would result in effective survey research was recognizing the needs and interests of each party involved in the approval of the survey, while holding true to the research goals. This consideration during the entire process of developing the online survey was in accordance with Barker, Pistrang, and Elliot, who explain

that “The main reason for following rigorous research methods is to minimize bias and reduce errors in drawing conclusions.”⁵

Survey Approval Process

Securing approval for the online survey was a process that included sending each draft to the Salvation Army’s personnel secretary in Atlanta, Georgia. The assistant personnel secretary was the direct contact, who would receive the document through email correspondence. After analyzing each draft of the survey, the assistant personnel secretary would send the document to the chief secretary⁶, who would peruse the document and provide written suggestions through email. Once the survey was accepted and approved by the chief secretary in its final form, it was then sent to the Territorial Executive Council (TEC)⁷, who serves as the final approving authority and who gave their approval without requesting any changes or contingencies. Accompanied by approval from the leaders of The Salvation Army’s Territorial Executive Council, the final form of the online survey was sent to Dr. David Currie for approval consideration from the IRB of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, which quickly reviewed and approved the online survey as it was presented. Following the approval of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s IRB, the survey was sent to The Salvation Army’s assistant personnel secretary for the Southern Territory, who disseminated the survey to active, retired, and only a few former officers of The Salvation Army throughout the southern territory of the United States.

5. Barker, Pistrang, and Elliot, *Research Methods in Clinical Psychology*, 6.

6. The Salvation Army’s position of Chief Secretary is the Vice Chief Executive Officer of The Salvation Army, a Georgia Corporation.

7. The Territorial Executive Council (TEC) is the legally recognized Board of Directors for The Salvation Army corporation’s Southern Territory in Atlanta, Georgia.

Feasibility

Utilizing an online survey tool as the research methodology instrument was the most viable option for reaching the largest number of participants who would be relevant for the research. The challenges to developing and disseminating an online survey instrument presented multiple, potential obstacles, including acceptance and approval by The Salvation Army's Personnel Department, The Salvation Army's TEC, and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's IRB. The approval process proved to be less time consuming than predicted, although there were some challenges in assuaging some minor agendas and biases on the part of some of the Salvation Army's territorial leaders. Additionally, the cost of utilizing the SurveyMonkey software was prohibitive, but this was greatly mitigated by the much less costly assistance of Dr. Bryan Auday, who provided use of his personal SurveyMonkey account, and The Salvation Army's continuing education for officers approval, which included the cost of working with Dr. Auday as an official, reimbursable expense.

Concerns

There were several concerns regarding the development of an effective online survey. The first concern was getting the survey to the largest possible number of participants. With the support of The Salvation Army's personnel department, the online survey could be disseminated to 940 active officers, 556 retired officers, and to 4 former officers throughout the southeastern territory. The support needed from The Salvation Army's personnel department was given, resulting in the combined participation of 571 active, retired, and previous officers, which equaled a response rate of 38%.

The second concern was the number of questions that should be included in the survey. Keeping the time to complete the survey to 5 to 8 minutes for the average participant was

important for generating the highest number of participants. Therefore, the number of questions asked, including questions that allowed for participant comments, was integral to keeping to this commitment. After testing the online survey on a small sample of participants, who easily completed it within 5 – 8 minutes, the survey contained the 24 questions that are included in the final draft.⁸

The third concern of developing the online survey was the influence of motivated cognition⁹ in the responses of some Salvation Army officers. This means there is the danger that some Salvation Army officers will express biases toward only the positive attributes of Salvation Army officership, thereby refusing, consciously or unconsciously, to recognize the work-related stressors attributed to the clergy role in which officers themselves and their children live. Though there were few, some responses in the online survey did reflect motivated cognition when asked to elaborate on some questions regarding the effects of work-related stressors on their children's lives. The existence of motivated cognition was evidenced by answers, which only reflected well on the survey participant, their officer colleagues, and The Salvation Army, and some participants avoided the questions that would require negative responses. Hughes and Zaki explain that, because "people have a need to feel good about themselves" and their affiliates, they will take "credit for successes, but not failures" and they will "elevate their relationship partners and in-group members in demonstrably unrealistic ways."¹⁰ Some answers put the responsibility of the officer's children's spiritual lives solely on the attitude officers displayed

8. See Appendix B.

9. Motivated cognition is the phenomenon "by which the goals and needs of individuals steer their thinking towards desired conclusions." Brent L. Hughes and Jamil Zaki, "The neuroscience of motivated cognition," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 19, no. 2 (February 2015): 62.

10. Hughes and Zaki, "The neuroscience of motivated cognition," 62.

toward their vocation, which they concluded was the reason for any negative behavior on the part of an officer's children. Fortunately, motivated cognition was reflected in the survey responses of only few participants.

A fourth concern in developing the online survey was peer jealousy. Because The Salvation Army's culture is based on a quasi-military structure, including rank and positional hierarchy, there was concern that some officers would either not participate or take a superior position when responding to the survey, solely on the basis of the rank and position of the researcher. There does exist some forms of peer jealousy among some Salvation Army officers, who judge the obtaining of higher education by other officers as an attempt to supersede what is considered the usual path for officers to "move up the ladder" by out educating their peers. Due to this concern, a request was made to the personnel department, asking that the name of the researcher not be included in order to prevent such biases from being reflected in the response rate or the answers to the survey questions by some officers. However, this request was not granted, which resulted in a few participants' answers appearing to be couched in advice for the researcher rather than objective answers to the questions.

The fifth concern was the trust of Salvation Army officers in the anonymity of the survey. Some Salvation Army officers are concerned that their appointments will be influenced by their level of agreeability. Therefore, these officers fear that any answers to the survey, which may reflect negatively on the work and requirements of Salvation Army officership, could possibly have adverse effects on their current and future appointments. As a result of knowing about this fear, it was paramount to the development and dissemination of the survey that officers could trust that the survey was completely anonymous and untraceable. In order to mitigate this fear,

SurveyMonkey's software was used and an anonymity clause on the survey itself was added, which stated,

Thank you for taking a moment to respond to this brief survey. It should only take you approximately 5-8 minutes to complete. This project is being undertaken to help The Salvation Army's Personnel Department in the Southern Territory gain a better understanding of how Christian disciplines that are modeled by Salvation Army officer parents influence their children's faith. All the information you provide is ANONYMOUS and COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. At no point will you be asked to give your name or any identifying information. As we grow up, our faith in God, or lack of faith, can be the result of influences experienced by those around us, including our parents. A central purpose of this survey is to explore your attitudes regarding how officership within the Salvation Army and the practice of spiritual disciplines might impact the family. Thank you, in advance, for participating in this study.

Unfortunately, the emailed message from The Salvation Army's personnel department in the southern territory did not include a promise of anonymity in their request for participation, which may have had some effect on the response rate:

Dear Friends,
Below you will find the link for a survey created by Captain Johnny Gainey. We would greatly appreciate you taking the time to respond to this brief survey, which should only take you approximately 5-8 minutes to complete. This project is being undertaken to help Captain Gainey complete his Doctoral Studies and the information gathered will be shared with The Salvation Army's Personnel Department of the Southern Territory as a way to help us gain a better understanding of how the challenges of officership and the practice of spiritual disciplines might affect officer families. In order to gather the best information, we are distributing this link to active, retired and former Officers of our Territory. Please click on the attached link to participate in the survey.
[https:// www. surveymonkey.com/r/2VLDKWP](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2VLDKWP)
Thank you for helping us better understand how we can best facilitate spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers.

The sixth concern in developing the online survey was clarity of what constitutes a "regular" practice. In the interest of maintaining continuity of understanding, a 5-8 minute completion time, and a high level of objectivity in participant answers, there was some concern that it would be difficult to fully clarify the meaning of "regularly practice," regarding the practice of spiritual disciplines in the homes of Salvation Army officer parents. In the final draft

of the survey, the definition of “regularly practice” was left to the understanding and assumption of each participant.

The final concern, during the development of the online survey, was acquiring the participation of Salvation Army officer parents while not wasting the time of Salvation Army officers who are not parents. This was accomplished by utilizing the option in SurveyMonkey’s software that allowed for non-parents to skip all the survey questions related to children. Once they answered “0” to question #6, “How many children do you have?” the software took the participant to the end of the survey and notified them that the survey was complete.

Survey Distribution

The online survey was disseminated to a total of 1,500 officers (940 active, 556 retired, and 4 previous) throughout the Southern Territory¹¹ of The Salvation Army. After one month, the opportunity for officers to participate in the online survey was closed. A total of 571 Salvation Army officers participated in the online survey.

Survey Style

The online survey was developed so that it included quantitative and qualitative research questions. Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate(R) Dictionary defines research as an “investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws.”¹² Online surveys are electronic and, as Williamson, et al. write, “Data transmitted in electronic form are much more flexible and greatly facilitates the process of data collection, data

11. See Appendix A.

12. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed., rev. and updated; 16th printing ed. (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, 2012). Accessed July 30, 2019. <https://search-credoreference-com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/content/title/mwcollegiate?tab=entries&alpha=R&page=148>.

capturing and data analysis, compared with print-based forms.”¹³ To collect data that would serve the research most effectively, the mixed method of combining quantitative and qualitative questions was used to offer closed-ended and open-ended questions. As R. Murray Thomas argues, “the best answer frequently results from using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.”¹⁴

The use of quantitative and qualitative questions in collecting data neutralizes “the weaknesses of each form of data,”¹⁵ and allows for needed statistical data to be collected while also providing opportunities for more detailed information to be gathered simultaneously.

Creswell and Creswell explain:

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. . . . Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. . . . Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the integration of qualitative and quantitative data yields additional insight beyond the information provided by either the quantitative or qualitative data alone.¹⁶

Providing quantitative questions provided the opportunity for gathering demographic information of Salvation Army officer parents, while the qualitative questions provided clearer understanding of how Salvation Army officer parents utilized spiritual disciplines to counter the

13. Kirsty Williamson, et al. *Research Methods for Students, Academics and Professionals: Information Management and Systems*. 2nd ed., ed. Ross Harvey and Stuart Ferguson (Wagga Wagga, N.S.W.: Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, 2002) p. 103.

14. R. Murray Thomas, *Blending Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods in Theses and Dissertations* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003), 7.

15. John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2018), 14.

16. Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 4.

negative effects of the work-related stressors associated with the clergy vocation, in order that they would be able to better facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

Thesis Research Questions

The online survey included the research goals of exploring the effects of Salvation Army officership on the children of officers as a result of the internal and external stressors associated with officership and to recognize and suggest specific spiritual practices that can give Salvation Army officers the ability to more effectively facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. As a means of understanding which stressors effect the facilitation of spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers, and which spiritual disciplines improve the likelihood that the children of officers will be better prepared for spiritual maturity, the following questions led the development of the survey:

- Which internal and external stressors, associated with Salvation Army officership, negatively affect the facilitation of spiritual maturity in the lives of officers' children?
- Which spiritual disciplines, when practiced in the home of Salvation Army officer parents, will best prepare Salvation Army officers, regardless of the associated stressors, to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children?

Additionally, the goals of the survey included exploring the specific categories of health (i.e., spiritual, physical, emotional, social, relational, and educational) that are affected in the children of officers as a result of specific vocational stressors experienced by Salvation Army officer parents and specific spiritual disciplines practiced in the home of Salvation Army officer parents. The questions that directed this portion of the research included a question for each category:

- Do some of the responsibilities of officers adversely affect the spiritual, physical, emotional, social, relational, or educational health of Salvation Army officers' children?

Survey Content

The online survey instrument included 24 questions, which were a mixture of closed-ended quantitative questions and open-ended, qualitative questions, which are broken down into four sections of question categories.¹⁷ “Indeed, many researchers end up using some combination of quantitative and qualitative research techniques, recognizing the benefits of employing multiple strategies for achieving more insight and increasing validity.”¹⁸

The first category of questions included 6 closed-ended, demographic questions that enabled the gathering of information that included the age, gender, length of officership service, and active and retired status of each participant. This data was later utilized to differentiate between, and look for correlations among, the participants of like, or different, genders, ages, and officership status, which could provide a better understanding of how work-related stressors among officers relate to these individual demographics.

The second category of questions included 4 closed-ended questions that gave the participants the option to identify the specific spiritual disciplines that are regularly practiced in their home. Each of these four questions included an open-ended option to add a spiritual discipline that was not provided among the possible answers in the survey.

The remaining category of questions included 14 questions, including 2 open-ended questions that offered survey participants the opportunity to share which Salvation Army

17. See Appendix B.

18. Janet M. Ruane, *Introducing Social Research Methods: Essentials for Getting the Edge* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 2016), 34.

officership responsibilities they believed contributed positively and negatively to their children's spiritual health. These two questions were followed by 5 Likert scale questions that sought to gain information on how officership responsibilities adversely affected the emotional, social/relational, educational, physical, and spiritual health of officers' children, and the option to follow-up the scale level they chose with a written comment (a total of 10 questions). Only the questions related to the spiritual health of the children were analyzed for this research project, as this was the specifically intended purpose of the research. The other categories of health were added for the purpose of further studies. The qualitative results of this category of questions provided information on the top 3 work-related stressors that Salvation Army officer parents believe contribute negatively to the spiritual health of their children, which included workload, travel, and itinerancy. This category also revealed the presence of motivated cognition among some officers, as well as the recognition that some children do not experience adverse effects in their spiritual lives due to the work-related stressors of officership in their parents' lives.

The final category of questions included 2 open-ended questions that gave the participants the opportunity to comment on the positive effects that officership responsibilities and regularly practiced spiritual disciplines had on their children. Only the question relating to the positive effects of spiritual disciplines regularly practiced in the home was analyzed for this research, as this was in keeping with the specific purpose and goal of the study. This portion of the survey revealed the importance of practicing spiritual disciplines in the homes of Salvation Army officers, as those who regularly practiced spiritual disciplines at home did see positive results in the spiritual lives of their children, despite the work-related stressors they experienced.

Survey Summary

In keeping with the inductive method of research, empirical generalizations were identified by observing patterns among the responses given by the survey participants.¹⁹ The raw data collected, analyzed, and presented from the resulting responses of the online survey was used in concert with the rest of the research contained throughout this dissertation. The results of the online survey proved to be helpful in developing an understanding of the external and internal, work-related stressors that Salvation Army officer parents experience and how those stressors can negatively affect their own spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of their children. The data also revealed the specific spiritual disciplines that were most often described as being regularly practiced by Salvation Army officers, which also provide beneficial information for developing an outline manual of spiritual practices that officers can utilize in their pursuit of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

The demographic data collected from the answers to the first six questions in the survey was inserted into charts that accompany the written presentations of provided outcomes, some of which also include the results of specific t-tests, which are also presented in charts.²⁰

Information collected from the second category of questions is presented in charts that lay out the statistical findings, which reveal correlating factors as shown by the inductive methodology used to analyze and calculate the raw data. The inductive method of research related to the online survey results also resulted in a description of how Salvation Army officers' experience of external and internal, work-related stressors adversely affect their own spiritual lives and the spiritual lives of their children. Furthermore, the outcomes of the online survey also

19. Ruane, *Introducing Social Research Methods*, 35.

20. See List of Illustrations.

provided a description of the spiritual disciplines practiced regularly by Salvation Army officer families and how those practices can positively affect the spiritual lives of officer children.

Conclusion

The survey results of this research show that, although Salvation Army officers do experience differing levels of work-related stressors, the benefits of regularly practicing spiritual disciplines at home can mitigate those adverse effects. Furthermore, the results of the online survey also show that male and female officers experience similar levels of stress related to the responsibilities of officership and how they see their responsibilities affecting the spiritual lives of their children. The results of the survey were invaluable to the outcome of the this thesis-project, as the officers' comments served as the main source of understanding how Salvation Army officers experienced the stressors of their vocational responsibilities and how the practice of spiritual disciplines served as a mitigating factor in the outcomes of their children's spiritual lives.

Although there was a relatively high response rate among Salvation Army officer participants in the Southern Territory of the United States, it will be the presentation and appropriation of spiritual disciplines facilitated by Salvation Army officers at home that will lead to the most positive outcome of this research. By utilizing the 4 cultural tools as laid out in the printed outline manual²¹ and the online webinar²² of this thesis-project, more Salvation Army officer parents will likely see more positive results in the spiritual maturation process of their children.

21. See p. 178.

22. To watch the webinar "Spiritual Formation for TSA Officer Families," go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcLVP73eLF6NkVPE8pvuIqQ>.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to identify the most effective practices for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers, so that Salvation Army officers will be better prepared to help their children grow in Christ despite the internal and external stressors associated with the vocational responsibilities of Salvation Army officership. In this chapter, a presentation of the results of an online survey is given, which was sent to all active, retired, and a few former Salvation Army officers in the Southern Territory of the United States¹, with the support of The Salvation Army's personnel department in Atlanta, Georgia.

The survey is divided into four sections of question categories.² The first category included six closed-ended questions that enabled the collection of needed demographic information from each of the participants. The second category of survey questions was made up of four questions that allowed each participant to identify specific spiritual disciplines practiced regularly in the officer family's home and to identify which regularly practiced spiritual disciplines each participant believed were most and least effective to their children's spiritual formation, as well as which spiritual disciplines were found to be most challenging for each officer family to practice.

1. See Appendix A.

2. See Appendices B and C.

The next category of twelve questions enabled the participants to identify how the responsibilities of Salvation Army officership affected the lives of their children and family. These questions were open-ended questions that gave the participants the option to make written comments to answer how much their officership responsibilities affected their children by answering according to five ordinal response categories that ranged from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

The final category of questions included two open-ended questions that gave the participant the opportunity to share which responsibilities and which spiritual disciplines regularly practiced in the home positively affected their children and enabled Salvation Army officer families to overcome the challenges of officership.

Discovering how the regular practice of spiritual disciplines positively affected the spiritual formation of the children of Salvation Army officers, despite the inherent stressors associated with Salvation Army officership, was a central interest in the purpose of the online survey.

Survey Results

Demographic Outcomes

The first category of survey questions determined the demographic information needed to differentiate the survey participants, so that the resulting data could be clearly evaluated, recorded, and reported.

Male and Female Participants

The first demographic question was designed to establish the number of male and female participants to discover any observable, correlating differences between the responses given by male and female officers. Figure 5.1 shows that there was not a large difference between the number of male and female participants, although there was a slightly higher female response

rate of 52.8% (299 of the 566 total number of Salvation Army officers who answered the first question) compared to a 47.2% male response rate (267 of the 566 total number of Salvation Army officers who answered the first question).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	267	46.8	47.2	47.2
	Female	299	52.4	52.8	100.0
	Total	566	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	5	.9		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.1. Participants' Sex.

Officer Status

The second demographic question gave further detail to the survey participants' officership status, identifying the number of active, retired, and former officers. The survey was not designed specifically for former officers; however, there were four former officers who became aware of the survey. Two former officers sought permission from The Salvation Army's Personnel Department in Atlanta, Georgia, and two sought permission from the researcher of the project, requesting permission to receive and participate in the survey. The overall result was a higher response rate from active officers, followed by a surprising and respectable rate of response from retired officers. As seen in figure 5.2, of the total number of 571 Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey, 389, or 68.1%, were active officers and 172, or 30.1%, were retired officers. The remaining number of participants who answered the second question were the 4 former officers, representing .7% of the 571 participants. 6, or 1.1%, of the 571 participants skipped the second question.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Active Officer	389	68.1	68.8	68.8
	Retired Officer	172	30.1	30.4	99.3
	Former Officer	4	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	565	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	1.1		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.2. Participants' Officer Status.

The higher response rate from active officers, compared to retired officers, has to do with the active officers' daily use of The Salvation Army's email program, which was the forum used by the Personnel Department to disseminate the online survey. The surprising response rate received from retired officers is a result of The Salvation Army's active pursuit in continuing communication with retired officers, which includes ongoing IT support for retired officers who are interested in maintaining Salvation Army supported email software and correspondence. The low number of former officer participation is a result of the intentional development goals of the online survey, which was developed and intentionally disseminated to active and retired Salvation Army officers by The Salvation Army's Personnel Department at Territorial Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia.

Years of Officership

The next two demographic questions captured the number of years each retired officer has been retired, the number of years active officers have served, and the age of each survey participant. These questions were designed to investigate how Salvation Army officer parents perceived how the work-related stressors of officership effected their children's spiritual

formation over periods of time and with respect to their status of officership (active or retired). There is evidence that “established family patterns continue to influence older children, even when parental control diminishes with increasing age.”³

Years in Retirement

The result of the 556 participants who answered the third question, 382, or 68.7%, were not retired officers, 56, or 10.1%, were retired for fewer than 5 years, 53, or 9.5%, were retired 5 – 10 years, and 65, or 11.7%, were retired longer than 10 years. This response rate among the retired officers was surprising, considering how most of the retired officers would have been 65 years old when they retired (although, some may have retired early due to chronic illnesses).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I'm not a retired officer	382	66.9	68.7	68.7
	I have been retired fewer than 5 years	56	9.8	10.1	78.8
	I have been retired between 5 - 10 years	53	9.3	9.5	88.3
	I have been retired longer than 10 years	65	11.4	11.7	100.0
	Total	556	97.4	100.0	
Missing	System	15	2.6		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.3. Participants' Years in Retirement.

3. Stephen Armet, “Religious Socialization and Identity Formation of Adolescents in High Tension Religions,” *Review of Religious Research* 50, no. 3 (March 2009): 290.

Years in Active Service

The fourth demographic question analyzed the number of years each participating Salvation Army officer has served as an officer. The available answers for each participant began with “0,” which allowed those with less than a full year of officership to identify themselves, followed by “1-3 years,” “4-10 years,” and “over 10 years.” The number of officers with less than a full year of active officership was only 1, or .2%, of the 566 participants who answered this question. 46, or 8.1%, of the participants served 1-3 years, 100, or 17.7%, served 4-10 years, and 419, or 74%, served over 10 years. The higher number of participants being those who have served over ten years is likely due to those with less years having no children or young children who are not yet displaying the autonomy required to express how work-related, parental influences affect their spiritual formation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1	.2	.2	.2
	1-3 years	46	8.1	8.1	8.3
	4-10 years	100	17.5	17.7	26.0
	Over 10 years	419	73.4	74.0	100.0
	Total	566	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	5	.9		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.4. Participants' Years of Officership.

Age Group

The fifth demographic question identifies the age group of each survey participant. This question determined that 63, or 11.2%, of the participants who answered this question were 18-

35 years old, 209, or 37.1%, were 36-55 years old, and 292, or 51.8%, were 56 years old and older. The higher number of those from the ages 36-55 and 56 years and older is likely reflective of the rising age of Protestant pastors in the United States, which, as of 2017, was an average age of 54 years old.⁴

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-35 years	63	11.0	11.2	11.2
	36-55 years	209	36.6	37.1	48.2
	56 and older	292	51.1	51.8	100.0
	Total	564	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	7	1.2		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.5. Participants' Current Age.

Number of Children⁵

The final demographic question captured the number of children each survey participant has in their family. The number of Salvation Army officer participants with no children was 57, or 10 %, of the 568 participants who answered this question. 65, or 11.4%, reported having 1 child, 206, or 36.1%, reported having 2 children, 158, or 36.3%, reported having 3 children, 58, or 10.2%, reported having 4 children, and 24, or 4.2%, reported having 5 or more children. It is

4. "The Aging of America's Pastors," Barna Group Inc., March 1, 2017, accessed August 7, 2019, <https://www.barna.com/research/aging-americas-pastors/>.

5. For further research, an interesting consideration would be to consider whether there is a correlation exists between the number and age of the children in an officer family and which spiritual disciplines the family regularly practices. It would also be interesting to consider the number and ages of the children in an officer family and how those statistics affect the decision to not practice spiritual disciplines at home. For example, is it difficult to practice spiritual disciplines at home with very young children or with multiple children of multiple ages, and is it true, therefore, that some officer parents choose to forgo such practices due to the complications of accommodating very young, multiple aged, or large numbers of children.

important to note that the number of children reported is not reflective of a total number of children, because it is likely that many of the Salvation Army officers who participated in the survey were married couples who reported the same number of children as their respective spouses, who also participated in the online survey. Furthermore, survey participants who reported no children were taken to the end of the survey and thanked for their participation but were not offered the opportunity to answer any questions beyond this sixth and final demographic question. This allowed for the analyzation of specific data that pertained only to Salvation Army officers with children, which was in keeping with the specific goals of the study. Fortunately, although the sample size of participants with children numbered only 511, the response rate remained at a respectable 34.1% of 1,500 Salvation Army officers who received the online survey.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	57	10.0	10.0	10.0
	1	65	11.4	11.4	21.5
	2	206	36.1	36.3	57.7
	3	158	27.7	27.8	85.6
	4	58	10.2	10.2	95.8
	5 or more	24	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	568	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3	.5		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.6. How many children do you have?

Demographic Conclusions

The 34.1% participation rate of active, retired, and former Salvation Army officers with children is evidence that Salvation Army officer parents—male female, young, middle-aged, aging, active, retired, and former—are interested in discussing and reporting on their experiences of the invaluable topic that is the challenge of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

Spiritual Disciplines

The purpose of this research was to discover the mitigating effects of practicing spiritual disciplines in the homes of Salvation Army officer families, where the work-related stressors that are typically associated with clergy members negatively affect their children. The next four questions identified the spiritual disciplines practiced in Salvation Army clergy homes, which spiritual disciplines the participants believed were most effective and least effective for their children's spiritual formation, and which spiritual discipline was most challenging to practice.

Practiced at Home

Question 7 gave the survey participant the option of choosing as many as applied to the participant's family, from 10 specifically named spiritual disciplines, and the option to specify one "other" spiritual discipline that may be specific to the participant's family. The specifically named spiritual disciplines listed for the participants to choose from were

- Bible study
- Scripture memorization
- Prayer
- Devotions
- Fasting
- Sabbath
- Solitude
- Service
- Tithing
- Generosity
- Other (Please specify)

As shown in figure 5.7, among the list of specifically named spiritual disciplines provided in the survey, the most frequently included spiritual discipline was “prayer,” with 404, or 79.1%, of the 511 Salvation Army officer parent participants, who answered this question, reporting “prayer” as a spiritual discipline regularly practiced in the home. Prayer was likely chosen by most because it is regularly practiced at meals and bedtime for most Salvation Army officers and their families and is therefore most readily understood and accepted among the children of Salvation Army officers.

Among the list of specifically named spiritual disciplines provided in the survey, the least frequently included spiritual discipline was “fasting,” with 65, or 12.7%, of the 511 Salvation Army officer parent participants, who answered this question, reporting “fasting” as a spiritual discipline regularly practiced in the home.

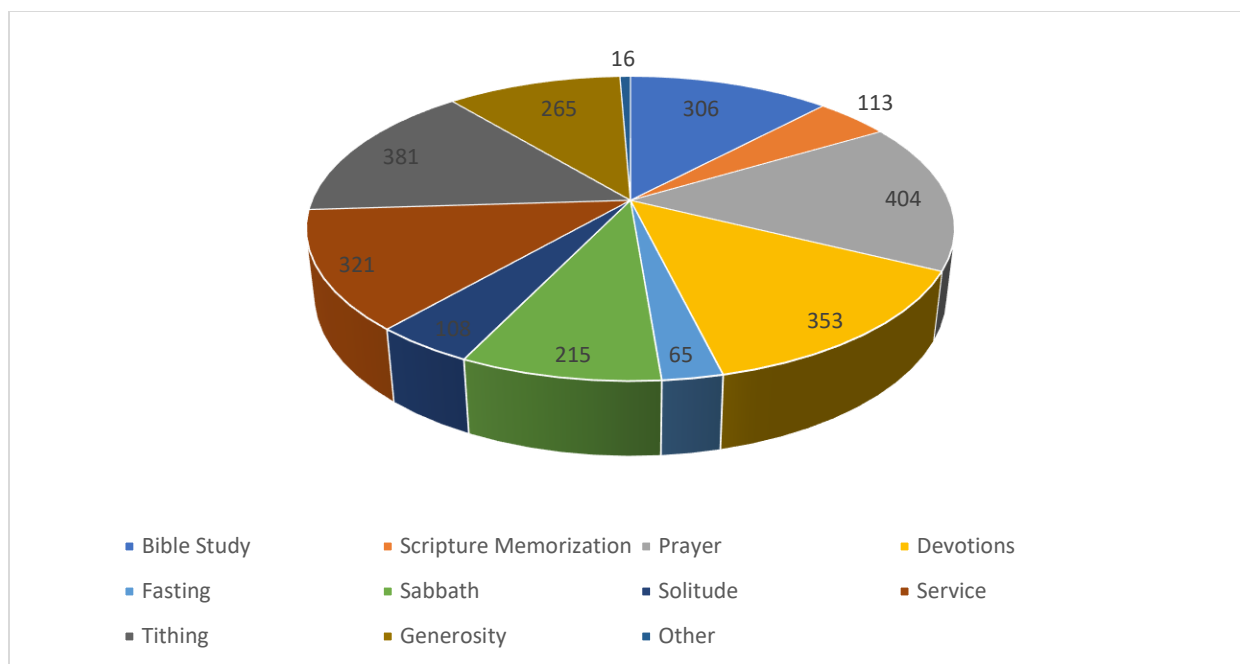


Figure 5.7. Spiritual Disciplines Practiced in Salvation Army Officer Family Homes.

16, or 3.1%, of the 511 survey participants commented on question 7k, or the “other” category. 6 of the 16 participants who commented on question 7k specified “witnessing” as the spiritual discipline regularly practiced by their family. One participant specified “testimonies” and another specified “evangelism,” both of which are closely related to “witnessing.” It is encouraging to note that Salvation Army officer parents, who encourage their children to witness and share their testimonies, are in line with the research of Christian Smith, who asserts that, although religious articulation is failing among the youth in the United States, it is integral for helping to develop one’s faith into reality.⁶ The spiritual disciplines added by those who specifically mentioned them as “other” are shown in figure 5.8.

6. Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 268.

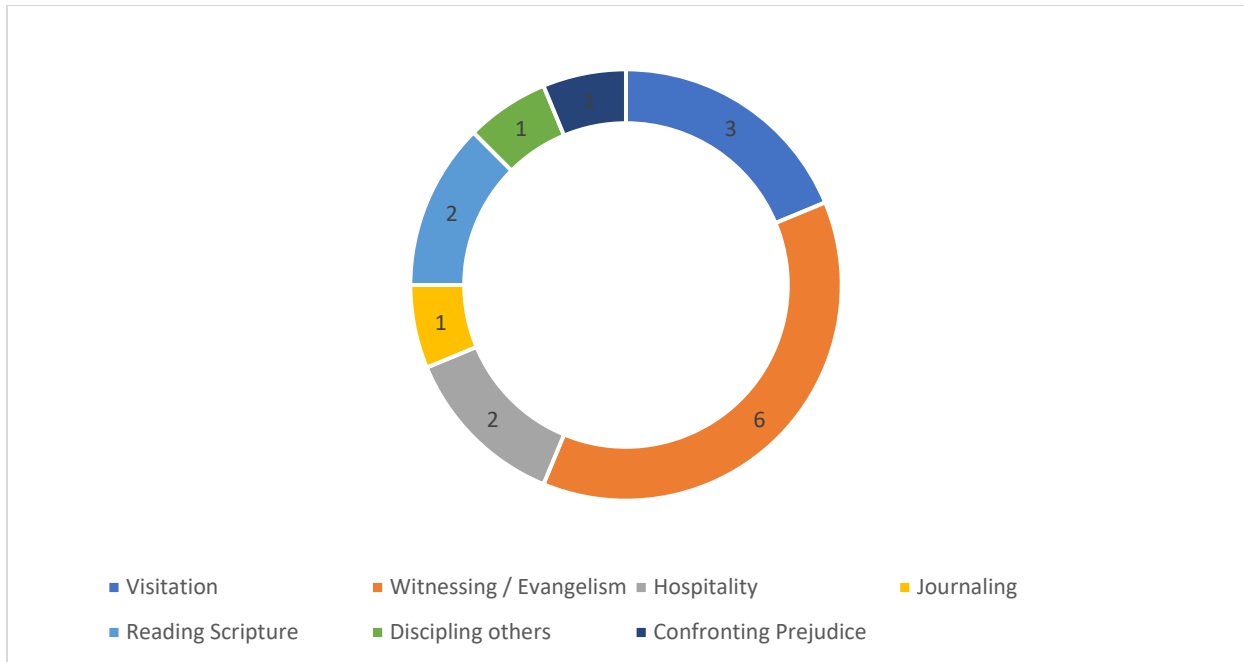


Figure 5.8. “Other” Spiritual Disciplines Practiced in Home of Officer Families.

Contributed Most to Children’s Spiritual Formation

The spiritual disciplines that the participants reported as the top three that Salvation Army officer families regularly practiced in the home, as recorded in figure 5.7, were “prayer” (404, or 79.1%, “tithing” (381, or 74.6%), and “devotions” (353, or 69.1%). However, as seen in figure 5.9, according to the participants’ answers to question 8, the “TOP 3 spiritual disciplines that contributed MOST to their children’s spiritual formation” were slightly different with 355, or 69.5%, selecting “prayer,” 242, or 47.4%, selecting “devotions,” and 157, or 30.7%, selecting “service.”

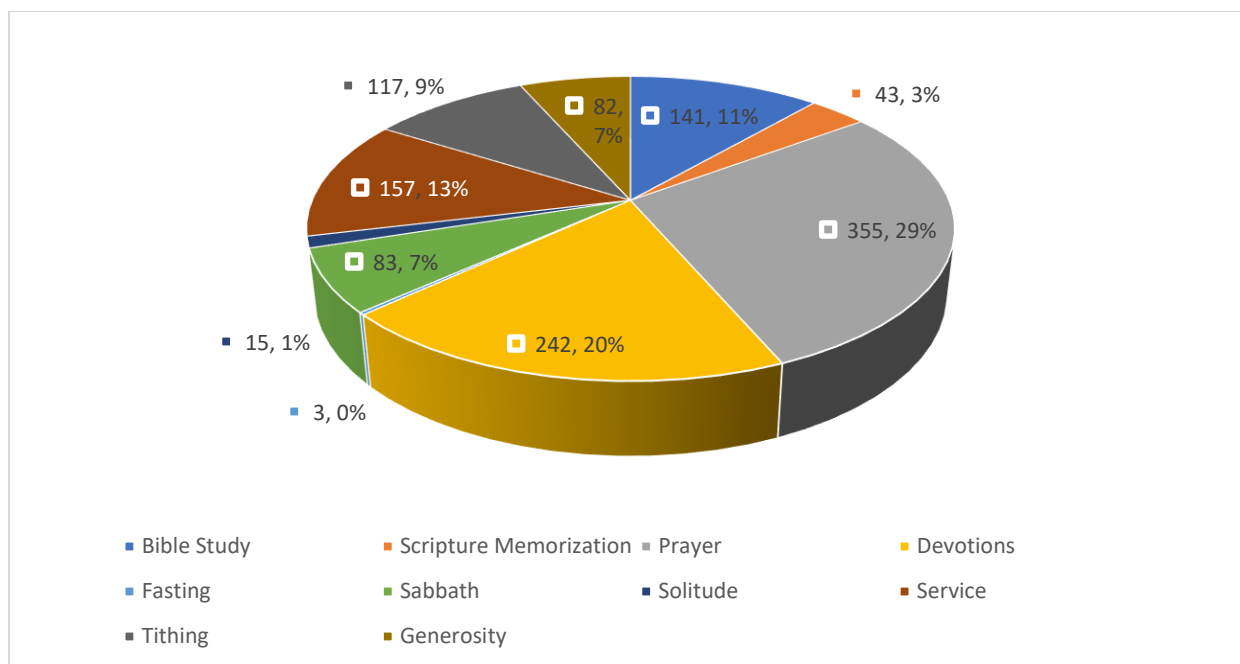


Figure 5.9. Top 3 Spiritual Disciplines that Contributed Most to Children’s Spiritual Formation.

Contributed Least to Children’s Spiritual Formation

The three least frequently included spiritual disciplines that the survey participants listed as being regularly practiced in the home, as recorded in figure 5.7, were “Scripture memorization” (113, or 22.1%), “solitude” (108, or 21.1%), and “fasting” (65, or 12.7%). However, as seen in figure 5.10, when answering question 9, the spiritual disciplines that the survey participants rated as the “Top 3 spiritual disciplines that contributed LEAST to children’s spiritual formation” did not completely correlate with the spiritual disciplines practiced, as seen in figure 5.10, where the participants selected “solitude” (206, or 40.3%), “fasting” (198, or 38.7%), and “tithing” (126, or 24.7%). It is notable that the top 3 spiritual disciplines that most participants selected as having contributed LEAST to children’s spiritual formation are also those which require self-denial. This top 3 list may reflect the work-related stress associated with the excessively busy schedules that most Salvation Army officers experience, more than it reflects the ineffectiveness of the spiritual disciplines themselves. Reflective solitude and fasting are among the spiritual discipline practices that foster spiritual renewal; however, it is common

for many pastors to avoid these spiritual practices because of a presupposition that busyness affirms one's godliness.⁷ Salvation Army officers are no exception to this pastoral reality, which is clearly stated in a response by one of the survey participants, who stated, "Duties could get in the way of fasting and observing a day of rest or sabbath."⁸

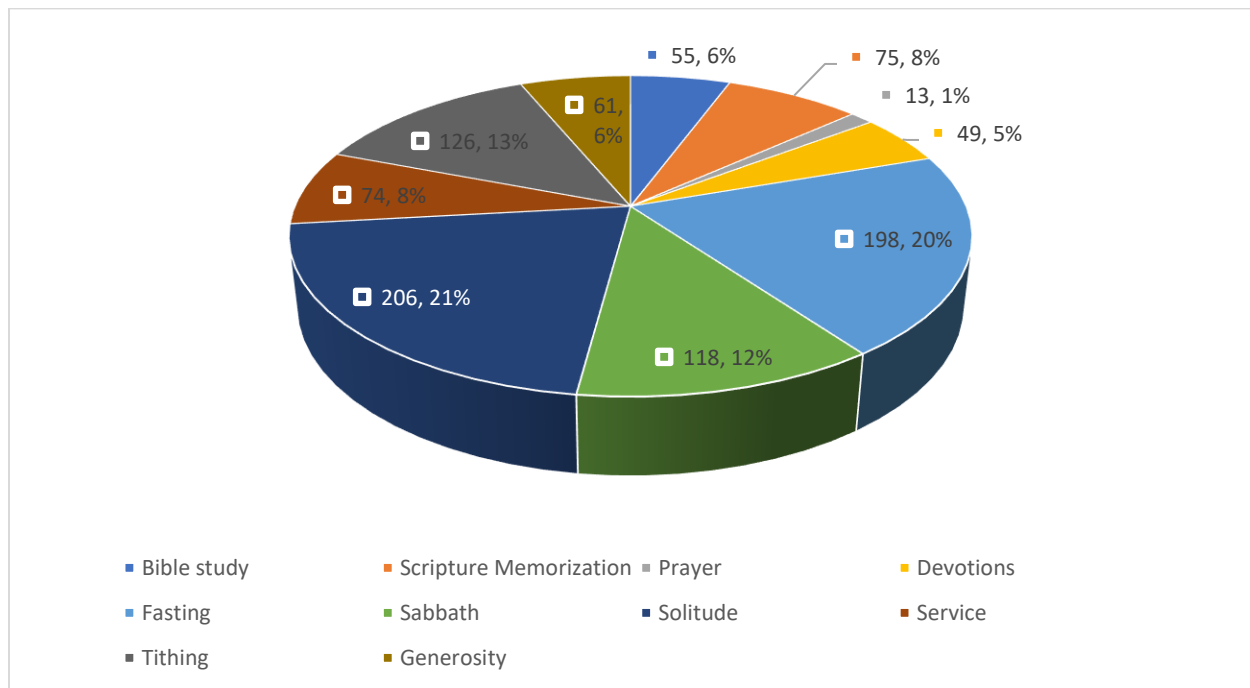


Figure 5.10. Top 3 Spiritual Disciplines Contributed Least to Children's Spiritual Formation.

Most Challenging to Practice

The final closed-ended question in this four-question category was also a multiple-choice question that sought to gather information on which spiritual discipline the participants found to be most challenging to practice due to the competing demands of Salvation Army officers' ministry responsibilities.

As seen in figure 5.11, participants of the survey identified "sabbath" as the most challenging spiritual discipline to practice. Again, this coincides with what many Salvation Army

7. Diane J. Chandler, "Pastoral Burnout and the Impact of Personal Spiritual Renewal, Rest-taking, and Support System Practices," *Pastoral Psychology* 58, no. 3 (June 2009): 275-276.

8. Anonymous comment from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

officers experience as an excessively heavy workload and schedule, which most survey participants considered the officership responsibility that is most harmful to their children's spiritual health, as recorded in table 5.1.

		Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Other (please specify)	4	.7	1.0	1.0
	Bible study	50	8.8	12.0	12.9
	Scripture memorization	64	11.2	15.3	28.3
	Prayer	7	1.2	1.7	30.0
	Devotions	29	5.1	7.0	36.9
	Fasting	78	13.7	18.7	55.6
	Sabbath	106	18.6	25.4	81.1
	Solitude	75	13.1	18.0	99.0
	Service	2	.4	.5	99.5
	Generosity	2	.4	.5	100.0
	Total	417	73.0	100.0	
Missing	System	154	27.0		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.11. Spiritual discipline that is most challenging to practice.

Adverse Effects of Officership Responsibilities on Child's Spiritual Health

Top 3 Negative Contributions

The next open-ended question was a qualitative question that sought to gather information on the responsibilities of Salvation Army officers that officer parents believed contributed in a negative way to the spiritual health of their children. The primary data of the

survey shows that 382 participants answered this qualifying question regarding which Salvation Army officer responsibilities negatively affected the children of officers. Further analysis showed that 12 participants answered “n/a” or “none” and others answered in ways that were not useful for the topic of the question, such as “I do not believe there are any responsibilities that had a negative impact,” and “Didn’t experience this,” resulting in an actual number of 344, or 67.3%, of the participants, who answered the question in a way that pertained to the subject matter. It is worth noting that the largest number of participants, among those who left the question blank or answered “n/a” or “none” (202), were Salvation Army officers with over 10 years of officership (135), followed by those with 10 or more years of officership and were aged 56 or older (95). This is most likely due to older officers no longer having children in the home, and, according to previous research, by the time clergy children reach adulthood, they reported their life satisfaction as equal to the more positive reports of non-clergy children.⁹ Older officers may experience this upward swing in their adult children’s more positive attitude toward their remembered experience of being children of clergy, as their overall reality—forgetting that, when they were the parents of younger children, the work-related stressors were more pronounced than they currently remember.

Another interesting finding among Salvation Army officers who were 56 and older and who answered question 12, was that some of their responses reflected the influence of motivated cognition—a refusal to recognize or admit any negative attributes pertaining to Salvation Army officer responsibilities—which was one of the concerns when developing the online survey. These officers’ responses also showed a propensity for “blaming the victim,” which includes the presupposition that bad things happen because the person has somehow failed; therefore, “people

9. Cynthia B. Wilson and Carol A. Darling, “Understanding Stress and Life Satisfaction for Children of Clergy: A Retrospective Study,” *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 1 (Feb 2017): 139.

in crisis and victims can be viewed as somehow deserving of what they get,” because “‘just and good’ people can master and control any event that happens to them and their families.”¹⁰ These officers’ responses give evidence that they believe an officer, who claims that their officership responsibilities contributed negatively to their children’s spiritual health, is a reflection of Salvation Army officers who have bad attitudes or officers who are unable to effectively parent.

- I believe that all of my responsibilities as an officer are positive. It’s how I have dealt with them that determines the way my children respond.
- It is my responsibility as a parent to balance raising my children and conducting ministry.
- This is being used as an excuse for poor parenting.
- I believe the negative often is from the officer’s attitude, not the responsibilities.¹¹

Of the 382 participants who answered question 12, 215, or 56.3%, specifically cited “workload” as the officership responsibility they believed negatively contributed to their children’s spiritual health. Salvation Army officers’ identification of “workload” as the number one stressor of their clergy role is in line with other research that show inordinate demands on pastors’ time as a primary, work-related stressor among clergy.¹² This number one recurring stressor, identified by the survey participants, was to blame the responsibility to keep up with a heavy “workload” on their lack of time spent with family, which included spending too much time at the church building, overwhelming administrative responsibilities, and excessive work schedules.

10. Pauline Boss, *Family Stress Management: A Contextual Approach*. 2nd ed., (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2002), 3, accessed August 12, 2019, <http://sk.sagepub.com.dtl.idm.oclc.org/books/download/family-stress-management-2e/n8.pdf>.

11. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

12. Chandler, “Pastoral Burnout,” 273.

- Too many programs.
- Long days and hours.
- The amount of time The Army demands of officers.
- Too many hours away from home.
- Lack of practicing spiritual disciplines as often as needed due to the workload of ministry and parenting.
- The enormity of the time demands that the work of The Army places upon officers has a negative effect on our children's spiritual health.¹³

The second most cited responsibility of officership that officers reported as negatively affecting their children's spiritual health was "travel." 74, or 19.4%, of the officers who answered this question stated that the time they are required by The Salvation Army administration to be away from home was harmful to their children's spiritual health. Salvation Army officers are required to attend multiple out-of-town conferences, trainings, camp assignments, and educational requirements each year, most of which take them away from their appointment location and their children for days or weeks at a time. The participants who cited "travel" as a responsibility they believed contributed in a negative way to their children's spiritual health, responded with answers to question 12 that included the repeating theme of "too much time away from their children."

- Being away from home. Councils, trainings, disasters, work related outings.
- Required time away from home, not with kids.
- Travel
- Leaving to go to various conferences
- Time away from home
- Attending many conferences and territorial events.
- Out of town events, when I had to leave my kids.
- Traveling for The Salvation Army and being away too much from family.¹⁴

The third most cited responsibility of officership that the survey participants believed contributed negatively to their children's spiritual health was "moving." 38, or 10% of officers

13. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

14. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

who answered this question claimed that the itinerant nature of officership in which officers can expect to move, at an average of every 2-5 years, to a new appointment in a new city, or even a new state, within The Salvation Army's Southern Territory of the United States, has been harmful to their children's spiritual health. This was a surprising discovery in the research, because this study hypothesized that "moving" would be the number one cited officer responsibility that officers believed contributed negatively to their children's spiritual health. When the participants answers cited "moving" as the responsibility that contributed negatively to their children's spiritual health, in this study, their responses included statements about having no church home, the difficulty of children having to change schools and friendships, and the lack of consistent community.

- Moving more frequently than expected; having to change schools, friends, and so on.
- No church home.
- The frequency of moves in this territory does not allow for children to settle into a community of faith before having to find a new one.
- Moving away from our "Community."
- Moving too often.
- Constant movement, moving; never seeing the end results of these disciplines.
- Moving!
- Moving frequently, I believe, negatively contributes to their spiritual lives.
- This last move into our current appointment has literally broken our children.
- Frequent moving has caused tremendous anxiety and depression.¹⁵

The first notable statistic that resulted from analyzing the data, regarding the 38 survey participants who cited "moving," or a response that directly alluded to the effects of moving, as one that negatively affected their children's spiritual health, was the comparison between the number of those who have served as Salvation Army officers for more than 10 years, which was 32, or 84.2%, compared to those who have served for less than 10 years, which was 15.8%. This

15. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

difference most likely was a result of longer serving officers having experienced more moves and having older children who are more profoundly affected by moving, as is specifically mentioned by some of the survey participants.

- Moving around as we do can be an issue as children get older and are trying to finish high school.
- When we were transferred before our child's senior year.
- One of our appointments was changed when my child was a senior. We had been at the corps for 6 years. It was a difficult change.
- Continual moving affects teens negatively.¹⁶

The second notable statistic revealed by analyzing the data, regarding the 38 survey participants who cited “moving,” or responding in a way that alluded to the effects of moving, as one of the responsibilities of Salvation Army officership they believed contributed negatively to their children's spiritual health, was the finding that 28, or 73.7%, were active officers and 10, or 26.3%, were retired officers. This statistic is likely reflecting active officers still experiencing frequent moves and retired officers no longer experiencing moves. However, the 26.3% of retired officers who mentioned “moving” as having a negative effect on their children's spiritual health are likely those whose children's negative experiences, which resulted from frequent moves, were also memorable for the officer parents. The least significant of the top 3 most notable statistics regarding the 38 survey participants who cited “moving” as an officership responsibility that negatively contributed to their children's spiritual health was the comparison of male officers, 17, or 44.7%, and female officers, 21, or 55.3%, showing that both male and female officers are concerned with the negative affect that frequent moves has on their children's spiritual health, though a slightly higher number of female officers are represented as being concerned about the negative contribution moving has on their children's spiritual health.

16. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

In table 5.1, the three most significantly mentioned officership responsibilities that the survey participants considered the most harmful to the spiritual health of their children are presented by officership responsibility, number of survey responses, and percentage of survey responses.

Table 5.1. Participants' Top Three Responses to Question 12

Workload	215	56.3%
Travel	74	19.4%
Moving	38	10%

Adverse Effects of Officership Responsibilities on Children's Spiritual Health

The next category of closed-ended questions were designed in the Likert scale response format, allowing the survey participants to choose one of five response options, from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” followed by question 22, which was an open-ended question that gave the participants the opportunity to comment further on their response to question 21.

Rating of Disagreement and Agreement

As seen in figure 5.12, more of the 407 survey participants, who answered question 21, “strongly disagree,” 80, or 19.7% , than “strongly agree,” 28, or 6.9%, that some of their officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of their children's spiritual health, and more survey participants “disagree,” 124, or 30.5%, than “agree,” 105, or 25.8% that some of their officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of their children's spiritual health. 20, or 17.2% of the survey participants answered “neutral.”

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	80	14.0	19.7	19.7
	Disagree	124	21.7	30.5	50.1
	Neutral	70	12.3	17.2	67.3
	Agree	105	18.4	25.8	93.1
	Strongly agree	28	4.9	6.9	100.0
	Total	407	71.3	100.0	
Missing	System	164	28.7		
Total		571	100.0		

Figure 5.12. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.

Male and Female Ratings

Analyzing the demographic data further on question 21, figure 5.13 shows that, of the 405 survey participants who responded to the statement, a fewer number of female officers “strongly disagree,” 34, or 8.4%, that their children's spiritual health was adversely impacted by some of their officership responsibilities, compared to the higher number of responses by male participants “strongly disagree,” 45, or 11.1%, and a fewer number of male officers “strongly agree,” 11, or 2.7%, than the number of female officers, 17, or 4.2%. The number of female officers, who “disagree,” 66, or 16.3%, with the statement in question 21 was higher than the number of male officers who “disagree,” 57, or 14.1%. Furthermore, the number of female officers who “agree” with the statement in question 21 is also higher, 57, or 14.1%, than the number of men who “agree,” 48, or 11.9%. 43, or 10.6%, of the male participants were “neutral” about the statement in question 21, while 27, or 6.7% of the female participants were “neutral.”

It is notable that there is not a significant statistical difference between the number of male and female officers who “strongly disagree,” and “disagree,” and those who “strongly agree,” and “agree” with the statement in question 21. Upon further analysis, when compiling the total number of male and female officers, it is encouraging to discover that the cumulative number of officers, 202, or 49.9%, who “strongly disagree” and “disagree” with the statement in question 21 is higher than the cumulative number of officers, 133, or 32.6%, who “strongly agree” and “agree,” revealing that a majority of the survey participants believe their responsibilities do not negatively impact their children’s spiritual health. However, it is unfortunate that 33.3% of the officers who responded to the statement in question 12 with “strongly agree” or “agree” represents 135 officer parents—a large minority of survey participants—who believe their children’s spiritual health is adversely impacted by their officership responsibilities.

			Sex		Total
			Male	Female	
Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	Strongly disagree	Count	45	34	79
		% of Total	11.1%	8.4%	19.5%
	Disagree	Count	57	66	123
		% of Total	14.1%	16.3%	30.4%
	Neutral	Count	43	27	70
		% of Total	10.6%	6.7%	17.3%
	Agree	Count	48	57	105
		% of Total	11.9%	14.1%	25.9%
	Strongly agree	Count	11	17	28
		% of Total	2.7%	4.2%	6.9%
Total		Count	204	201	405
		% of Total	50.4%	49.6%	100.0%

Figure 5.13. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health. *Sex Crosstabulation.

Although the number of male officers and female officers differ (cumulatively, 102 male officers “strongly disagree” and “disagree,” and 100 female officers “strongly disagree” and “disagree,” while 59 male officers “strongly agree” and “agree,” and 74 female officers “strongly agree” and “agree” that some officership responsibilities have negatively impacted their children's spiritual health), the t-test comparison revealed no significant statistical difference

between the overall levels of disagreement or agreement between male and female officers. As seen in figures 5.14 and 5.15, [$t = 1.329$, degrees of freedom = 403, $p = .185^{17}$]. This means the overall ratings of disagreement and agreement with the statement that some officership responsibilities negatively impact the officers' children's spiritual health is equally experienced by male and female officers who agree, and with male and female officers who disagree.

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	Male	204	2.62	1.216
	Female	201	2.79	1.261

Figure 5.14. Group Statistics.

Figure 5.15 - Independent Samples Test

Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	Equal variances assumed	-1.329	403	.185
	Equal variances not assumed	-1.329	401.946	.185

Figure 5.15. Independent Samples Test.

Active and Retired Officer Ratings

A t-test also confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences between the levels of disagreement and agreement among active and retired officers regarding their belief

17. The significance level must be $<$ or $= .05$ to indicate a significant statistical difference.

that officer responsibilities negatively impact the spiritual health of their children. As seen in figures 5.16 and 5.17, [$t = 1.357$, degrees of freedom = 399, $p = .176$].

Your current status within The Salvation Army is:		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	Active Officer	275	2.76	1.241
	Retired Officer	126	2.58	1.229

Figure 5.16. Group Statistics.

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	Equal variances assumed	1.357	399	.176
	Equal variances not assumed	1.362	244.815	.174

Figure 5.17. Independent Samples Test.

Time in Service Ratings

Finally, a t-test confirmed no significant statistical difference between the levels of disagreement and agreement that some officership responsibilities negatively impact the spiritual health of their children, between officers who have served 10 or less years and officers who have served more than 10 years. As seen in figures 5.18 and 5.19, [$t = 1.329$, degrees of freedom = 403, $p = .185$].

	How many years have you served as an officer?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	10 or fewer years	91	2.84	1.088
	More than 10 years	314	2.67	1.279

Figure 5.18. Group Statistics.

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health.	Equal variances assumed	1.150	403	.251
	Equal variances not assumed	1.256	168.729	.211

Figure 5.19. Independent Samples Test.

Comments on Level of Agreement with Question 21

In keeping with the purpose of this research, which includes the identification of work-related stressors that affect the spiritual formation of Salvation Army officers' children, the next question in this category gives the participants the opportunity to comment on their level of disagreement or agreement with the statement in question 21, "Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's spiritual health." Because

question 22 was like question 12, it is likely that most, 343, or 67%, of the survey participants who have children skipped this question. Further analysis of question 22 also revealed that, of the 68 participants who left comments, 23 participants responded with some form of “not applicable,” or “no comment” and 6 participants responded with something like “same as above,” “see above,” or “see my answer for #12.”

There were a few pertinent responses to this question, which gave further insight to why officers agree or disagree with the statement in question 21. For example, among those who chose “strongly disagree” or “disagree,” with the statement, “Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children’s spiritual health,” the responses of the survey participants included those such as,

- Each move has helped my children see God’s faithfulness. It wasn’t easy, but they’re all three active in the corps¹⁸ and professing Christians.
- Both of my children are strong Christians and are raising their children the same way.
- All of my children love the Lord mightily!
- One child is an officer, the other child is a leading local officer¹⁹ in her corps.
- Sometimes it is like most teenagers that drift, but mine have generally returned and are good believers now.
- They are both in ministry fields today.
- If anything, they were challenged to be more than “Sunday” Christians because of the holistic spiritual teachings of The Army.
- Every move appears to grow my children in the Lord.²⁰

Although there were 204 participants who disagreed with the statement in question 21, and there were 133 participants who agreed with the statement in question 21, those who “strongly agreed” and “agreed” with the statement were more willing to leave comments

18. A “corps” is the militant term used in The Salvation Army to refer to a Salvation Army church.

19. A “local officer” is the militant term used in The Salvation Army to refer to a member who serves as a lay leader in a Salvation Army congregation.

20. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

regarding their agreement that “Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children’s spiritual health.” Some of these comments included troubling statements, such as,

- My children found it hard to believe in a loving God, because they saw how overworked their parents were.
- My child struggles with her spiritual life because of previous painful moments of moving in the name of God.
- All 4 of my children have less than a strong Christian faith.
- Because of many things, including me working so much, and some of the unfairness he has seen me experience with other officers and in my current appointment, he doesn’t even want to go to church anymore.
- One child hates The Army for what he’s been through and claims to be an atheist.
- My oldest daughter has no desire to attend Church as an adult.
- One of my children has indicated that he/she doesn’t know if he/she can believe in a God that is so demanding and would require the pain of constant upheaval.
- The reaction to the move before senior year was to be open to non-Christian influences.
- Because of the officership demands on us as parents, one of our children left The Army and is not interested in church attendance of any kind.

How Spiritual Disciplines Helped Officer Family Overcome Challenges

The final, pertinent question in the online survey sought to discover how the spiritual disciplines that were regularly practiced in the homes of Salvation Army officer parents helped the officer family to overcome the negative effects of work-related stressors experienced by Salvation Army officers. Answering question 24, the survey participants were given the opportunity to answer the question, “If your children / family have experienced adverse impacts in any of the above areas (i.e., emotional health, social/relational health, educational progress, physical health, and spiritual health), how have spiritual disciplines helped you overcome these challenges? For the purposes of this study, it is only the adverse impacts on spiritual health that will be analyzed here. The other areas will be mentioned as subjects for future research.

The responses to question 24 that proved useful for this research were not as plentiful due to 204 survey participants with children not commenting. Many participants commented by

sharing specific spiritual disciplines that were practiced but did not share how those spiritual disciplines helped the officer family overcome adversities caused by the work-related stressors of Salvation Army officership. Only 38 participants responded in ways that pertained to the topic of the question. Of the 38 survey participants who responded aptly to question 24, there were reports of the positive benefits brought about by regularly practicing spiritual disciplines in the home, which proved to be helpful during family difficulties.

- Studying the word and a deep prayer life has helped us to overcome many challenges.
- During times of transition we as a family focus on the unchanging nature of God. Prayer time, devotions, tend to remind us of the blessings we have. They produce a perspective of gratitude rather than a perspective of resentment for what we do not have.
- Prayer has definitely been key in the hard times. Though scripture memorization may not have been regularly practiced, it has had a part to play in helping us through the hard times.
- We have found that being in God's Word comforts us during the adverse times.
- Prayer in particular has helped to make those times of transition easier to deal with.
- Trusting God through prayer has helped us overcome challenges.
- Through prayer & reliance on God's faithfulness, we deepened our faith & personal resilience.
- Reading God's Word, devotions, and prayer are all things that keep our family together and spiritually sound.
- We have had hard times over the past 2 years with our oldest. If it were not for prayer and the fellowship of other officers, I don't know where we would be.
- Through our faith and prayer, the Lord worked out all the details of our move during our daughter's senior year. This was probably one of the most difficult times of my officership, but also a time of growth within our faith.²¹

Positive Survey Statements

There were positive statements by some of the survey participants that should not be overlooked, which are representative of most officers surveyed who do not agree that their responsibilities as officers have adversely affected their children's spiritual health. These

21. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

comments are encouraging and give evidence of the spiritual maturity that many officers have been able to maintain despite the internal and external stressors that threaten the spiritual wellbeing of many clergy families. Most of the survey participants' positive responses to the work of officership were focused on the inclusion of their children in active ministry.

- I do not believe that our responsibilities had a negative impact. Our family time looked different, for example, at Christmas, but instead of hanging out at the house, we served together at the corps.
- I don't feel that my ministry has contributed in a negative way to my children's spiritual health.
- I don't feel like our officership affected our children in a negative way.
- My children have always played an active role in our ministry. I believe that in doing so, our ministry became a family ministry. This has shaped them in their career paths to seek to continue ministry.
- Our children were included in most everything we did. . . . All of this has had a positive impact on their spiritual health.
- We have the ability to allow our children to minister now, regardless of age, training them more in-depth than maybe other corps kids.
- My children have a strong relationship with Jesus Christ, have learned valuable leadership skills, and have a clear understanding of the difficulties of life and God's ability to carry us through the toughest circumstances.²²

Unanticipated Survey Results

One result that was not expected by the initial hypothesis was the large number of officers (40% of survey participants with children) who reported no adverse effects of officership responsibilities on the spiritual health of their children. This was an encouraging statistic, considering the busy schedules, travel requirements, and itinerant nature associated with serving as Salvation Army officers.

Another surprising result was the low number of participants who mentioned "moving" as a responsibility of officership that officers with children regarded as harmful to their children's spiritual health. Although, "moving" was mentioned in the top three most cited

22. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

responsibilities that adversely affected their children's spiritual health, it was specifically mentioned in the comments of only 10% of the participants who have children. Because officers are moved at an average of every 2-5 years, during their active officership, "moving" was hypothesized to hold a higher place among the problematic responsibilities than the research showed.

The final unanticipated outcome was the large number of officers who cited "workload" as the number one officership responsibility they believe negatively affected their children's spiritual health. The fact that 53.6% officers place "workload" higher than "travel" and "moving," was a surprising evidential outcome of the survey, which revealed that The Salvation Army's administrative requirements, e.g., monthly reports, human resources, employee management, board meetings, fundraising, and other business related requirements, are leading the way in work-related stressors among Salvation Army clergy parents.

Survey Lessons Learned

There were some insights gained from the results and responses of the survey that revealed some ways that the survey could have been better developed. First, question 12, i.e., "What responsibilities do you have as an officer that you believe contribute in a negative way to your child(ren)'s spiritual health?" was so like question 22, which was an option to comment on the participants' response to the statement in question 21, i.e., "Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my child's spiritual health," that very little additional insight was gained by providing question 22. The result of these two questions being so similar was that most of the participants skipped question 22 and many left comments referring to their answer for question 12. Question 12 should have been left for the follow-up response option to what was question 21 in the survey instrument.

A second lesson found at the conclusion of the survey analysis had to do with the wording of question 24, i.e., “If your children / family have experienced adverse impacts in any of the above areas, how have spiritual disciplines helped you overcome these challenges?” Because the question ends by asking how the spiritual disciplines helped “you” overcome these challenges, most of the participants who left comments responded with first-person accounts of how the spiritual disciplines have helped the participants, as the officer parents, overcome the challenges of officership. The goal of the survey was to discover how spiritual disciplines helped officer parents to facilitate spiritual formation in their children, not how spiritual disciplines helped officer parents with their own spiritual formation. The wording of this question could have been better crafted to keep the survey participants better focused on how regularly practicing spiritual disciplines in the home of officer parents helped the officer parents’ children overcome the challenges of living in a clergy home.

The final lesson learned upon the conclusion of analyzing the survey data was the minimal number of options for question 4, i.e., “How many years have you served as an officer?” In retrospect, it would have been beneficial to give the option for more collections of years as this may have allowed the researcher to glean helpful data resulting from officer responses with other years of service. For example, contrasting the answers of those with 20-25 years of service with those who have 30-35 years of service may have provided some insightful consistencies or correlations that the broad range of “Over 10 years” does not provide.

Survey Conclusion

As evangelical clergy members, Salvation Army officers are leaders within the universal Christian Church, and they experience the same challenges inherent within the role of serving as pastors. Furthermore, Salvation Army officers also live with the challenges of discipling their

own children just like all clergy families. The Salvation Army is a worldwide denomination that plays an important role in the ecumenical body, and its clergy are committed to faithfully supporting and participating in the work of Christ in the world. This commitment to Christ means facing the struggles that Jesus himself assures his followers they will experience²³; however, these difficulties are not experienced by Christian parents alone—their children are also influenced by the inherent difficulties of living in a Christian home, as well as experiencing the challenges that are specific to being part of a clergy family. Therefore, it is important for Salvation Army officers to introduce effective practices in their home that give their children opportunities to experience and grow in their Christian faith.

The online survey provided by this study afforded Salvation Army clergy parents the opportunity to share the internal and external challenges of their clergy vocation, which they believed negatively affected their children's spiritual health, and to share which spiritual disciplines, regularly practiced at home, were beneficial in helping their children mature in their faith despite the challenges of living as a clergy family. Many officers were confident that their Salvation Army officership did not negatively affect their children's spiritual health, while others believed their children's Christian formation was hindered by the difficulties of officership. The challenges that were most evident to many officers, who participated in the survey, pertained to workload, travel, and itinerancy. Although, all Salvation Army officers experience these difficulties, those who regularly practiced spiritual disciplines in their homes were confident that these practices positively influenced their children's spiritual development even though their children dealt with the same clergy family challenges as other officers' children. This was evidenced by comments, such as,

23. John 16:33.

- Prayer has given us a platform to teach reliance on God. Service and generosity have allowed them to see purpose in our ministries and moves.
- Prayer provided help when needed. Sabbath was essential for our health & emotions. Study often gave us answers.²⁴

As a result of the survey responses, it is recognized that Salvation Army officer parents and their children would benefit greatly from being formally introduced to the four cultural tools presented by Kenda Dean, in her book, *Almost Christian*²⁵, which Salvation Army officer parents can use at home to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

24. Anonymous comments from Salvation Army officers who participated in the online survey.

25. See chapter 2 of this study.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

Introduction

The emphasis of this study was to explore the dilemma many Salvation Army officers face, regarding the nominal, or rejected, faith of some of their children. As Kinnaman and Matlock assert, “the church,” which includes The Salvation Army, “has a dropout problem.”¹ There are three goals that this research aims to address. The first goal is to explore the work-related stressors that adversely affect the spiritual lives of Salvation Army officer parents and their children. The second goal is to identify which spiritual disciplines are regularly practiced in the homes of Salvation Army officer families. The final goal is to provide a helpful tool for The Salvation Army’s southern territorial² leadership to provide to Salvation Army officer parents, which can be utilized in their homes as a model for facilitating spiritual maturity in their children.

In this chapter, the data that was collected, analyzed, and calculated from the qualitative and quantitative results of the online survey, along with the information gathered from the Literature Review and the Biblical/Theological Framework, has been applied to the “4 Cultural Tools” theory as described by Kenda Dean, in her book, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*, and has been developed into a tool that can be used by Salvation Army parents to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

1. David Kinnaman and Mark Matlock, *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019), 15.

2. See Appendix A.

Overview of the Problem

Most Salvation Army officer families in the Salvation Army's Southern Territory of the United States, begin their officer family lives as cohorts of a 2-year seminary residency, along with many other residents, who live, serve, pray, worship, eat, play, go to school, and generally share life together at the College for Officer Training in Atlanta, Georgia. Following the two years of close relationships, familiar people and places, and sharing life with many other people who are fervently and optimistically serving Christ and preparing to lead others to do the same, these officer families are scattered throughout the Southeastern United States, where they are appointed to serve as Christian leaders in a new city, far from one another and, for most of the them, far from extended family, friends, and familiar places. The stressors inherent to Salvation Army officership are common to many clergy families, and, like other clergy families, many Salvation Army officers discover that their children are adversely affected by the external and internal challenges that accompany their clergy vocation. Therefore, this thesis project's intent was to identify the most common work-related stressors that adversely affect Salvation Army officer families, and to identify the spiritual disciplines that are most effective for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of officers, despite the adverse effects of external and internal stressors.

Findings in Relation to Biblical/Theological Review

Salvation Army officer parents experience the same challenges as most parents; however, they are also susceptible to the added complications of the clergy vocation, which are common to clergy families of all Christian denominations. The responsibilities of parenting are often difficult enough; therefore, coupled with the stressors of serving as clergy, can complicate the role of parenting even more, especially when it comes to facilitating spiritual maturity in the

lives of one's children. Jesus himself provides an excellent model of parental/spiritual leadership that Salvation Army parents can witness by observing Jesus' interactions with his closest disciples throughout the four gospels of the New Testament. Jesus' parental model is clearly recognized in his actions and words. Jesus cared for his disciples with the love of a caring parent, providing discipline, learning opportunities, and even meals. It was common for a Jewish rabbi and his followers to mimic a family in which the rabbi "became like a father."³ Like a good parent, Jesus' was an authoritative leader, who, as the "good shepherd,"⁴ cared just as much for challenging his disciples as he cared for encouraging and supporting them. Jesus' parental characteristics as the leader of his disciples serves as an example to be followed by Salvation Army officer parents, who desire, pray, and want to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

Following Jesus' model, Salvation Army parents are commanded to lead their children to become imitators of Christ. The results of the online survey show empirically that Salvation Army parents, who invite their children, as Jesus invited his disciples, to participate in regularly practiced disciplines in the intimate and private setting of home, are more likely to see positive formation in the spiritual lives of their children. Specifically speaking, the four communal practices (cultural tools) that Scripture identifies as practices Jesus presented to his disciples, and that Salvation Army parents would benefit from inviting their own children to appropriate, are claiming a creed, belonging to a community, pursuing a call, and confessing confidence. Jesus did not force his followers to participate in his provisions of spiritually forming opportunities; he invited them to participate, and they chose whether to participate in and appropriate Jesus'

3. David Bivin, *New Light On the Difficult Words of Jesus* (Holland, MI: En-Gedi Resource Center, Inc., 2005), 19.

4. John 10:11.

invitations to these opportunities that could lead to spiritual maturity. Though there are no guarantees that regularly practicing spiritual disciplines at home will result in highly committed Christian children, with the participation and power of the Holy Spirit, these spiritual practices can be transformed into tools that trigger generative faith in the children of Salvation Army officers.

Findings in Relation to Literature Review

Following the conclusion of the literature review, it was found that the work-related stressors, which are inherent to clergy families, coincide with those identified by the Salvation Army officer survey participants in this study. For example, the work of Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick presented the most often recurring themes that resulted from their survey of clergy families, which included answers referring to not having enough time, high expectations, and the stress of moving.⁵ Additionally, the research of Michael Morris and Priscilla Blanton revealed the work-related stressors experienced by clergy families are also common to other professional family types, and include stressors such as problems inherent to mobility, lack of time, and high demands.⁶ The survey conducted in this research revealed the top 3 work-related stressors identified by Salvation Army officer families are workload, travel, and moving.

The facilitation of spiritual maturity in the children of Salvation Army officers can be intensified by work-related stressors, just like any other clergy family, because of the multifaceted complications associated with the unique social environment of the clergy family.⁷

5. Cameron Lee and Jack Balswick, *Life in a Glass House: The Minister's Family and The Local Congregation* (Pasadena, California: Fuller Seminary Press, 2006), 190-5.

6. Michael Lane Morris and Priscilla White Blanton, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," *Family Relations* 43, no. 2 (April 1994): 189.

7. J. Deluca, "The holy crossfire: Diagnosis of a pastor's position," *Pastoral Psychology* 28 (1980): 233-242, quoted in Michael Lane Morris and Priscilla White Blanton, "The Influence of Work-Related Stressors on Clergy Husbands and Their Wives," *Family Relations* 43, no. 2 (April 1994): 189.

However, within this portion of the literature review, there were also studies that gave evidence of how family strength and resilience can positively influence the familial outcomes of struggles and difficulties. The research of Cynthia Lietz revealed that family strengths can enable families to remain highly functioning despite the experiences of extreme difficulty.⁸ Also, the research of John DeFrain and Sylvia Asay presents convincing evidence that families who, in the face of difficulties, continue to share appreciation and affection, positively communicate, and have a sense of spiritual well-being are able to maintain a healthy level of functioning.⁹ Salvation Army officer parents, who maintain a home environment that continues to serve as a sanctuary for the children in the midst of difficulties, will be able to more effectively facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.¹⁰

In the next portion of the literature review, the external and internal stressors to which clergy families are most susceptible are identified. The external stressors that the studies of previous researchers recognized, which are most common to Salvation Army officer families, as evidenced by the responses in the online survey presented by this study, include congregational stressors, which are rooted in boundary intrusions and the lack of a healthy social support system; and organizational stressors, which are rooted in itinerancy and overwhelming schedules. Morris and Blanton assert that the multiplicity of external stressors experienced by

8. Cynthia A. Lietz, "Uncovering Stories of Family Resilience: A Mixed Methods Study of Resilient Families, Part 1," *Families in Society* 87, no. 4 (Oct-Dec 2006), 580.

9. John DeFrain and Sylvia M. Asay, eds., *Strong Families Around the World: Strengths-Based Research and Perspectives* (Binghamton, NY: Routledge, 2007), 450-2.

10. George Barna, *Revolutionary Parenting: What the Research Shows Really Works* (West Monroe, LA: Tyndale Momentum, 2010), 138-40.

clergy families can intrude upon the preferences of clergy families¹¹ and often result in the needs of the clergy family not being met.¹²

The literature review also agreed with the results of the online survey results of this study, revealing similar findings about the internal stressors experienced by clergy families. The internal stressors that can adversely affect the spiritual formation of children in clergy families include clergy members' emotional well-being, which is influenced by the level of emotional maturity, a desire for significance, and parenting style.

The family systems theory of Murray Bowen insists that highly differentiated individuals are able to separate their emotional and intellectual functioning¹³, enabling them to experience less marital conflict, maintain better physical health, and instill a higher level of emotional maturity in their children, which helps them respond in healthier ways to difficulties.¹⁴ The survey results of this study reveal evidence of low levels of emotional maturity in some of the participants' responses, which, when passed on to their children, can result in a lack of interest and respect for the clerical role of their parents and even a disdain for the Church and resentment toward God.

The research of Ellison and Matilla shows evidence that many clergy members have a tendency, consciously or unconsciously, to place too high of an expectation on themselves,

11. Morris and Blanton, "Predictors of Family Functioning Among Clergy and Spouses," 30.

12. Cynthia B. Wilson and Carol A. Darling, "Understanding Stress and Life Satisfaction for Children of Clergy: A Retrospective Study," *Pastoral Psychology* 66, no. 1 (Feb 2017): 130.

13. Murray Bowen, *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1993), 210.

14. Bowen, *Family Therapy*, 285.

which was shown to be the source of the most frequent problems of clergy members.¹⁵ The online survey statistics gathered for this study show evidence for heavy workload requirements for Salvation Army officers, some of which might be self-imposed.

Finally, the scholarly work of multiple research projects, such as that of Lee and Balswick, in their often cited book, entitled, *Life in a Glass House*, shows that an authoritative parenting style¹⁶, i.e., parents who are loving and supportive, is optimal for raising children who are more likely to share their parents' religious commitments.¹⁷

The survey results of this study resembled previous studies and did not offer any recognizable contradictions. However, as hypothesized, the external stressor of monetary struggles, which is mentioned as a primary, work-related stressor experienced by clergy families in many of the previous research on the topic, was not mentioned by any of the Salvation Army officer participants of the online survey provided by this study. This is likely due to the Salvation Army's exceptional provisions for officers, including the use of a quarters (parsonage), vehicles, household furniture and goods, excellent health insurance, a retirement pension, and other benefits that allow Salvation Army officers to avoid the typical financial worries that many clergy families consider a work-related stressor.

Key Outcomes

The consistently cited outcomes that resulted from calculating the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the online survey, revealed some consistent themes, which

15. Craig W. Ellison and William S. Matilla, "The Needs of Evangelical Christian Leaders in the United States," *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 33.

16. Susie D. Lamborn et al., "Patterns of Competence and Adjustment among Adolescents from Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful Families," *Child Development*, 62, No. 5 (Oct. 1991), 1050.

17. Lee and Balswick, *Life in a Glass House*, 167.

provide the basis for the provision of tools for Salvation Army officer parents to use at home as means of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children.

1. Salvation Army officers need a readily available, printed, or multimedia, tool to accompany their desire to present and regularly practice spiritual disciplines as a family at home. This tool should include suggestions for spiritual disciplines that can be practiced with the family at home.
2. Salvation Army officers need to be reminded that some apprehension about discipling their own children is common but unnecessary, because children of all ages are more accepting of their parents' spiritual guidance than many parents assume.
3. Salvation Army officers need to be educated and encouraged about the ways in which spiritual disciplines can be effectively integrated into the regularly experienced homelife of the individual family.
4. Salvation Army officers need to be encouraged to utilize the provisions of professional counseling that The Salvation Army provides, which will allow them to share their struggles and gather helpful tools for overcoming the internal and external, work-related stressors of officership that affect the spiritual health of their families.
5. Salvation Army officers need to be educated on the reality of external and internal stressors that affect clergy families, so that they are more willing to seek help for themselves and their families. This will also help some officers to avoid the dangers of "motivated cognition" and "blaming the victim."
6. Salvation Army officers need to receive ongoing education, beginning in their 2-year residency at the College for Officer Training, and continuing throughout their years of

officership, on the spiritual disciplines that officer families can regularly practice at home to facilitate spiritual maturity in their children.

7. Salvation Army officers need to be encouraged to continue the regular practice of spiritual disciplines at home, before they have children, while they are raising children (including with and without their children), and after their children have left their parent's home. This will ensure that Salvation Army officers are more confident in their ability to present, practice, and teach their children and grandchildren how to appropriate spiritual disciplines and give their children confidence in the spiritually forming benefits of participating in these means of grace.

8. Salvation Army officers need to be made aware of the literature, including books, articles, other printed materials, videos, websites, and seminars that emphasize, teach, and instruct Christian parents on how families can effectively practice spiritual disciplines at home.

Recommendations

Introduction

In response to the findings provided by the outcomes of this research, recommendations for enabling Salvation Army officer parents to regularly practice spiritual disciplines at home with their children will be given in order to help mitigate the deficits of spiritual nominalism and rejection and to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of the children of Salvation Army officers. As Salvation Army officers become parents, or continue their current parenting, they will be challenged by the external and internal stressors that threaten the spiritual development of themselves and their children. These threats can be greatly reduced by officer parents who

display a healthy parenting style, a confident parental discipleship, a healthy mental and spiritual well-being, and reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

Outline Manual: 4 Cultural Tools¹⁸

It has been the hypothesis of this research that the four communal practices, suggested by Kenda Dean, in her book, *Almost Christian*, are a helpful model for Salvation Army officers to utilize in their pursuit of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. These 4 cultural tools include 1) claiming a creed, 2) belonging to a community, 3) pursuing a call, and 4) confessing confidence. The use of these categories will be helpful for Salvation Army officers, because they are easy to remember, they are denominationally indifferent, and they are easily explainable. In fact, they can be further simplified by categorizing them as 1) creed, 2) community, 3) call, and 4) confidence, if this is helpful to the officer/clergy parent.

Claiming A Creed

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.¹⁹

The first²⁰ cultural tool that should be implemented in the home of Salvation Army officer parents is “claiming a creed.” A creed is the story about God that the children are taught to confess, which instills in them an understanding of why this God is worthy of following. For the Christian, the creed that is claimed is one that answers the questions, “Does Jesus want to

18. The Spiritual Practices Outline Manual for Salvation Army Officers, which has been presented to The Salvation Army’s Personnel Department at Territorial Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia can be viewed in Appendix D.

19. John 3:16-17 NIV.

20. The use of the words “first,” “second,” “third,” and “final,” when introducing the 4 cultural tools (spiritual practices) does not mean that there is an order to presenting these disciplines; this language is used, in this dissertation, simply as a means of presenting each of the 4 cultural tools. All 4 cultural tools should be presented, in no particular order as regularly practiced spiritual disciplines in the home of Salvation Army officer parents.

save me?” and “Does Jesus have the power to save me?”²¹ One source of a creed that can be claimed by the officer’s family could be a passage of Scripture that is memorized, such as John 3:16-17, Matthew 16:15-16, or Matthew 28:18-20. A second source for a creed that can be claimed by the officer’s family could be the Apostle’s Creed, the Nicene Creed, or another ancient creed of the Church. The third source for a creed that can be claimed by the officer’s family could be a liturgical responsive reading, such as that written by Cameron Cole:

Question: What is the Gospel?

Answer: The Good News!

Question: What is the Good News for you and your neighbor?

Answer: Christ died to save us from our sins!

Question: What is the Good News for the whole world?

Answer: Christ is King!²²

Presenting the spiritual practice of claiming a creed can be done by posting a hand-written or printed copy of a chosen creed on a bathroom mirror, by stating it occasionally during a meal, or by spending time memorizing and reciting the creed during devotions or during a ride in the car. Claiming a creed can also be presented as a form of art in which the family creates a painting or a craft with the words of the creed that can be framed and hung on a wall in the house. Occasionally asking one another to recite the creed by memory is a helpful way to instill the creed within the hearts of the children and the parents.

Belonging to A Community

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."²³

21. Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2010), 72.

22. My paraphrase. Cameron Cole is the Director of youth Ministries at the Cathedral Church of the Advent, and the founding chairman of Rooted Ministry.

23. John 13:34 NIV.

The second cultural tool that should be implemented in the home of Salvation Army officer parents is “belonging to a community.” For the Salvation Army officer family that is practicing spiritual disciplines in the home, this community starts with the immediate family in which the children have a confident “sense of belonging.”²⁴ Belonging to a community means the children are part of a family that lives out the story of Christ together with parents who recognize that facilitating spiritual maturity in their children is part of their parenting responsibility.²⁵ The immediate family serves as a model of Christian community, reminding the children that following Jesus is not an individual pursuit, but is lived out as the “body” of Christ.

Belonging to a community, for the officer family, means living a consistent Christian life in which the parents live out their faith at home just as faithfully as they live their faith in the corps²⁶ and in public. The children need to hear their parents speak specifically of Jesus, and not only mention “God” when praying, teaching, or otherwise mentioning the name of the One whose form is the goal of their children’s Christian formation. Belonging to a community, for the officer family, also means the children observe their parents valuing their faith with and without the children, e.g., they see their parents reading the Bible, praying, being careful about what they watch on television and the computer, and even what they listen to. This does not mean the parents become legalistic prudes, but they are mindful about how the culture of the world influences them and they make conscious efforts to observably mitigate those influences. Belonging to a community, for the officer family, also means going to one another with difficulties and having the emotional maturity to love each other through the challenges of life

24. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 72.

25. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 54-5.

26. A “corps” is the quasi-military term used by The Salvation Army that refers to a congregation or Salvation Army church.

without using an authoritarian parenting style to shame or induce fear in the children for their sins or wrongs. Just as Jesus modeled an authoritative, parental, leadership style (holding his disciples to high standards while also giving them his full support and love), officer parents should practice and provide good listening skills, effective disciplinary strategies, and generous grace, regardless of the situation. Finally, belonging to a community, for the officer family, also means incorporating their life of faith into the life of the congregation. There is a time for the officer family to practice spiritual disciplines in the privacy of family only opportunities; however, the Christian community that the children belong to at home must also have the power to instill the value of serving as participants of the greater Christian community.

Pursuing A Call

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.²⁷

The third cultural tool that should be implemented in the home of Salvation Army officer parents is “pursuing a call.” The practice of pursuing a call means believing Jesus is calling each person in the family to “contribute to a larger purpose.”²⁸ Pursuing a call also means recognizing that the choices we make affect more than the self, because each member of the family is learning how to make every decision with Jesus and others in mind. When the officer family practices pursuing a call, the children are learning that their decisions affect the other members of the family; furthermore, the children are learning that each member of the family has a moral responsibility to look out for the well-being of the other family members.²⁹ As Jesus modeled

27. John 15:16 NIV.

28. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

29. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 75.

and taught his disciples to love one another and sacrifice for one another, the officer family should be one that looks out for the benefits of the other family members before they look out for their own benefits.³⁰ Each family member's call is one in which individual choices are not made with only the individual's wants in mind. Whether deciding when to do homework, when to pray together, when to share a meal, which college to go to, what chores to do, or which career to pursue, pursuing a call means always considering the needs of the rest of the family, the greater community, and the will of Christ for the world.

The practice of pursuing a call as an officer family means being mindful of helping one another take care of the home, sharing the responsibilities of pets, and doing what is necessary to mitigate family stress. Pursuing a call as an officer family also means participating—as a family—in service projects to neighbors and the greater community, e.g., helping elderly neighbors take out the trash or rake their yard; being a good example of hospitality; volunteering together to help clean a littered road, etc. Pursuing a call in the home helps children develop their understanding of where they are spiritually gifted and how the Holy Spirit is calling and preparing them to participate in the body of Christ.

A practical example of pursuing a call in the home of an officer family can be the use of a family advent calendar, in which the daily activities of the calendar are service projects, such as baking cookies for a widow in the neighborhood, or babysitting for a busy couple with children, rather than doing something that is enjoyed only by the officer family, such as receiving candy or going on an entertaining family outing. By focusing on others, pursuing a call helps the children of officers recognize the power of Christ that is experienced through caring for others.

Confessing Confidence

30. John 15:12-13.

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.³¹

The fourth cultural tool that should be implemented in the home of Salvation Army officer parents is “confessing confidence.” The practice of confessing confidence means helping the children know that, despite how chaotic the world may appear, God is bringing them and the world to an ultimate good.³² Helping children face present difficulties with confidence in Christ’s control of the future empowers them and diminishes the anxiety that is prevalent among so many young people today. Confessing confidence also means the family believes life has meaning because they are accompanied by Christ and, therefore, they have what they need to face the present.³³

Practicing the spiritual discipline of confessing confidence in the officer family means being intentional about sharing Scripture, doing devotions, and modeling a sense of hope as Christian parents. Memorizing Scripture together, posting Scripture passages on the refrigerator, mirrors, and/or as forms of art in the home is helpful for planting reminders for children to see that Jesus is in control of the world and their futures. Depending on the age of the children, putting small notes that include Scripture in their school lunch, at their table settings, or in the form of an occasional text can also be beneficial for helping children confess confidence in Christ. Confessing confidence also means going to Jesus in prayer and going to Scripture for wisdom—with the children—when making decisions, discussing challenges, or facing difficulties. One more invaluable way in which the spiritual practice of confessing confidence

31. John 14:2-3 NIV.

32. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 49.

33. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 78.

can be presented and experienced in the officer family is by offering the opportunity for children to give their testimony. Sharing testimonies gives children the opportunity to recognize and verbalize how Christ's story and their story collided in their lives, which is experienced as an encounter with the faithfulness of God.³⁴ "Articulacy fosters reality."³⁵

Considerations

Age of Children

The age of the children has a bearing on the form and method of practicing spiritual disciplines in the home of Salvation Army officers. Developmentally, children at one stage of life will welcome some forms and methods of practicing spiritual disciplines in the home but will reject other forms and methods. For example, preschoolers and high school students have different ways of seeing the world. Preschoolers are imagination driven and high school students are philosophical thinkers,³⁶ which means coloring a picture of Jesus during family devotions might work well with a preschooler, whereas a high school aged teen might better respond to a discussion about doubts and apologetics. The age of the children will also influence when officer parents will be able to practice spiritual disciplines with their children at home. The younger an officer's children are, the more available they are to their parent's schedules; but, as they get older, it may only be during meals and bedtimes that a parent can spend quality time with them for things like praying, doing devotions, or reading a line or two of Scripture. However, it is important that Salvation Army officer parents use some of the time available to practice spiritual

34. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 146.

35. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 268.

36. Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy, *It's Just a Phase so Don't Miss It: Why Every Life Stage of a Kid Matters and at Least 13 Things Your Church Should Do About It* (Cumming, GA: Orange, 2015), 155.

disciplines as a family in the home, because children who practice spiritual disciplines at home are more likely to develop generative faith—faith that bears fruit.

Presentation

Like a good meal, presentation is important. When practicing spiritual disciplines at home, adding a touch of “different” can change what might be just another reading of the Bible into a ceremony that is unique enough to create a life-long, spiritually rich habit in the life of a child. “Ritual gives form to the formless Spirit.”³⁷ For example, an action as simple as lighting a candle at the table during devotions, or getting on one’s knees to pray, can transform a few minutes of reading a story out of a devotional book, or praying before bedtime with the family, into a memory-making moment in the presence of Jesus. It is also important to remember that the opportunity to share in a spiritual practice with family is an invitation from a loving parent—not a mandate from a dictator. If tension enters the practice, the spiritual benefits of the practice may be lost and resentment about the practice may develop.

The presentation of spiritual practices in the home is influenced by the spiritual and emotional maturity of the parents; therefore, the invitation to participate in these means of grace requires the parents to model the Christ-like grace and patience of a genuine shepherd of Christ’s sheep. “In the end, awakening faith does not depend on how hard we press young people to love God, but on how much we show them we do.”³⁸

Confidence

Many parents have a fear that their children will respond negatively to practicing spiritual disciplines at home; however, most children, including teens, are more willing to practice

37. Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, rev. and expanded ed., (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1996), 91.

38. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 120,

spiritual disciplines,³⁹ especially when they are celebratory.⁴⁰ Parents should expect their children to participate in, and provide meaningful responses to, questions and discussions about God, the Bible, and Jesus, because, in contrast to what most parents believe, most teens, like younger children, are teachable and want to be taught about faith, even when they behave as if they do not.⁴¹

Model the Way

Unless Salvation Army officer parents model the way to practicing spiritual disciplines, practicing them at home with the children will have little effect. “The best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities.”⁴² Children are more influenced by seeing their parents practice spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible, praying on their knees, and getting up early to do devotions than they are by having their parents read the Bible to them or pray with them. Modeling spiritual practices in the home begins with the parents making the regular practice of spiritual disciplines an important part of their own lives. The faith of children, including teens and young adults, is most influenced by the faith of their parents, regardless of what parents may assume; therefore, parents can be assured that, in most cases, they “will get what they are,”⁴³ religiously speaking.

Consistency

39. Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 267.

40. Thompson, *Family*, 141.

41. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

42. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

43. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 261

The amount of time the family spends practicing spiritual disciplines is less important than their own consistency in practicing and modeling them.⁴⁴ Living the message does more to influence the spiritual formation of a child than words.⁴⁵ Salvation Army officers' lives are typically filled with ministerial, administrative, and travel responsibilities that leave little time for the most important responsibility of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children; however, practicing these cultural tools in the home does not require hours of activity; it only requires that parents practice spiritual disciplines consistently. When traveling, some of these practices can be done over the phone—perhaps through a Skype or FaceTime call. Others can be practiced by leaving a text of a short passage of Scripture, a word of prayer, or a devotional story left on the pillow of a child. There is always a way for parents to invest in the most important aspect of their children's lives—the regular practice of spiritual disciplines, which visibly exemplify the soul-saving story, the ongoing presence, and the unwavering promises of Christ.

Grandparents

The itinerant lifestyle of Salvation Army officer parents, who can expect to move often and far away from extended family, still allows for officers to influence the spiritual lives of their grandchildren. Younger generations are peculiarly influenced by the faith of parents and grandparents, as is evidenced throughout history.⁴⁶ Grandchildren are greatly influenced by their grandparents' responses to life's tragedies and celebrations, which can have an indelible influence on the grandchildren's spiritual formation. Grandparents, whose faith is seen as having

44. Thompson, *Family*, 89.

45. Thompson, *Family*, 23.

46. Thompson, *Family*, 111.

evidence of unconditional trust in, and love for, Jesus can use their wisdom, grace, and love to share Jesus with their grandchildren in powerful ways, if only during an occasional visit, a phone call, or through the means of mailed gifts, such as a Bible or age-appropriate devotional book, Christmas and Birthday cards that include Scripture and a written prayer, and other gifts that represent faith in Christ, such as jewelry that includes a cross or another Christian symbol.

Why Practice Spiritual Disciplines as a Family?

The world would have us believe that faith has no influence on the well-being and livelihood of a person. However, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence that suggests faith and spiritual practices have meaningful and positive effects on the lives of children, which help in the development of healthy, productive, hopeful lives.⁴⁷ Therefore, although children, teens, and young adults may complain about, or question, the purpose and significance of practicing spiritual disciplines as a family, the empirical evidence shows that religious faith and practice has proven to be a significantly powerful and positive influence in the overall lives of children and adults.⁴⁸ Therefore, Salvation Army officer parents should be encouraged to know that their spiritual influence can have a positive effect on every aspect of their children's lives.

No Guarantees

Keep in mind that practicing spiritual disciplines in the home with children offers no guarantee that one's children will become committed followers of Jesus. "Spiritual disciplines are like garden tools. The best hoe and rake cannot guarantee healthy fruit; they can only help

47. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 263.

48. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 263.

create less obstructed conditions for growth.”⁴⁹ These cultural tools, or spiritual practices, are means of grace that the Holy Spirit can use to transform children’s lives into the form of Christ, which is the goal of Christian formation.⁵⁰ A parent’s responsibilities include presenting Christ to their children, but it is the child’s responsibility to appropriate the opportunities, lessons, and practices that are presented to them. “Your children are responsible for the way they respond to your parenting.”⁵¹ Practicing spiritual disciplines requires humility in the parents, who understand that they do not give Jesus to their children—Jesus is already with their children.⁵² As the primary means of spiritual leadership in the family, parents present a living expression of their life with Jesus as they model and invite their children to participate in these means of grace as well.

These cultural tools do not guarantee officers’ children will love and commit their lives to Jesus. Parents cannot give faith to their children, but can only encourage and affirm their children’s faith by the way the parents’ express and share their own conviction, passion, and commitment to Christ.⁵³ Ultimately, Christians rely on the Holy Spirit’s incarnational power and presence to transform these spiritual practices into means of helping the children of officers know who God is, participate in the body of Christ, discern the call of Christ for their lives, and confess confidence in the future provided by Christ.

Cultural Tools Conclusion

49. Thompson, *Family*, 16.

50. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 50.

51. Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, 2nd ed. (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2005), 16.

52. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 104-5.

53. Thompson, *Family*, 69.

Salvation Army officers, like all Christian clergy, are human beings; therefore, having their own opinions, biases, and apprehensions toward suggestions regarding the area of life in which some believe they are experts, there will be those who will reject any suggestions for how to better facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of their children. Some officers will resort to motivated cognition, which will impede upon their ability to recognize work-related stressors of officership that can negatively influence them and their children. Others will be encouraged to know that there is an ongoing interest in helping officers become more effective in discipling their own children. Because of the extensive, and sometimes overwhelming, workload, busy travel schedules, and itinerant culture of Salvation Army officership, Salvation Army officer parents and their children will benefit greatly from becoming aware of the reality of these stressors and how regularly practicing spiritual disciplines at home as a family will benefit their spiritual lives, despite the difficulties inherent in Salvation Army officership.

Future Research Possibilities

This research project explored the external and internal stressor related to Salvation Army officership and how those stressors affect the children of Salvation Army officers, and then correlated those stressors against the mitigating effects of spiritual disciplines that some Salvation Army officers practice at home. The number of Salvation Army officer children, whose faith is nominal or rejected by the time they reach adolescence or adulthood, is good reason to develop a plan of action and helpful tools that are created specifically to aid Salvation Army officers in mitigating spiritual losses among their children. Face-to-face interviews with officer parents who are willing to discuss their family's spiritual lives, as well as the practice, or lack of practice, of spiritual disciplines at home could provide helpful insights as to how some

Salvation Army officers are able to overcome the familial, spiritual deficits that are common to other Salvation Army officer families.

Also, the survey for this research included questions that revealed how the responsibilities of Salvation Army officership negatively affected the emotional, social/relational, educational, and physical lives of officers' children. The results of these questions would be fodder for a deeper insight into the ways in which the inherent stressors of Salvation Army officers can negatively affect the overall lives of officers' children.

Concluding Remarks

The responsibility for Christian parents to raise their children in the knowledge and will of Christ is one that is commanded throughout Scripture with no caveats made for parents with excessively busy jobs, travel schedules, or vocations that require them to move. These include commands of God in the Old Testament, starting with Israel before crossing into the Promised Land:

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.⁵⁴

In the New Testament, Paul also instructs fathers to bring their children “up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”⁵⁵ Beyond the obvious priority of giving ongoing attention to their own spiritual lives, is the biblically espoused responsibility of officer parents to raise their children in Christ. As stewards of the precious property of God, officer parents are raising up little Jesus imitators. Therefore, unless officer parents intentionally practice and present spiritual tools that

54. Deut 6:1-2 NIV.

55. Eph 6:4b NIV.

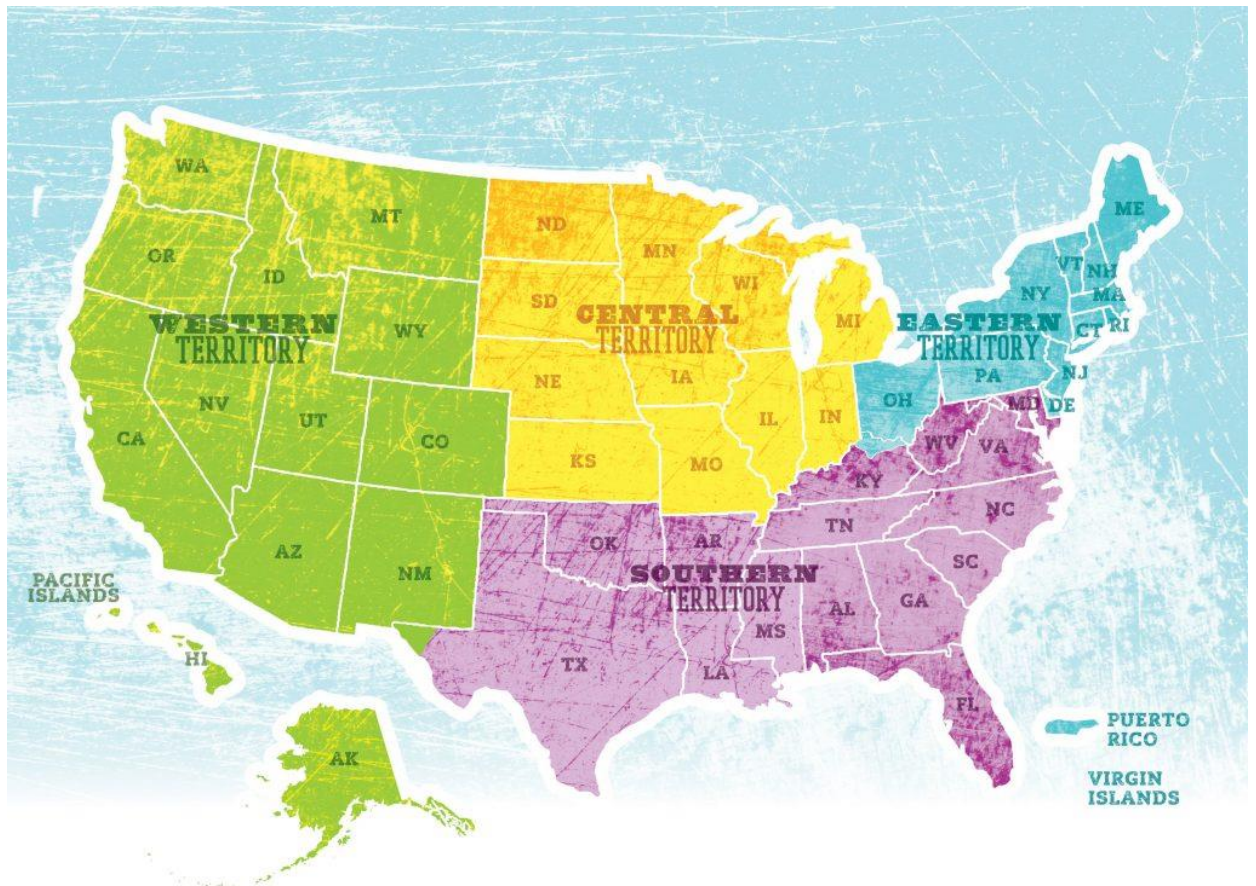
the Holy Spirit can use to help one develop a growing, generative faith, their children will lose out on the most important catechistic example and influence of their lives—Christ-following parents.

This thesis-project has been an invaluable undertaking, regarding the recognition of inherent stressors that officership can have on Salvation Army officers and their children. Like all Christian clergy, Salvation Army officers must exemplify the importance of participating in communal, spiritual practices with their families, so that the children of Salvation Army officers are less likely to be adversely affected by their parent's work-related stressors, and they will be more likely to become imitators of Jesus as they rely on the Holy Spirit and the presence of Christ to transform familial spiritual disciplines into vehicles of fruit-bearing faith. The Salvation Army will experience many benefits from emphasizing the regular practice of spiritual disciplines in every Salvation Army officer's home, which will subsequently benefit many generations of Salvationists to come. "A whole and healthy family is a service to this world, and the pastoral care that family members provide one another is the principle ministry of family life, preceding and undergirding all other forms of ministry."⁵⁶

56. Thompson, *Family*, 22.

APPENDIX A

MAP OF SALVATION ARMY TERRITORIES IN THE UNITED STATES



APPENDIX B

ONLINE SURVEY METHODOLOGY INSTRUMENT

Thank you for taking a moment to respond to this brief survey. It should only take you approximately 5-8 minutes to complete. This project is being undertaken to help The Salvation Army's Personnel Department in the Southern Territory gain a better understanding of how Christian disciplines that are modeled by Salvation Army officer parents influence their children's faith. All the information you provide is ANONYMOUS and COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL. At no point will you be asked to give your name or any identifying information.

As we grow up, our faith in God, or lack of faith, can be the result of influences experienced by those around us, including our parents. A central purpose of this survey is to explore your attitudes regarding how officership within The Salvation Army and the practice of spiritual disciplines might impact the family.

Thank you, in advance, for participating in this study.

1. You are:

Male

Female

2. Your current status within The Salvation Army is:

Active Officer

Retired Officer

Former Officer

Not an Officer

3. If you are a retired officer, how long have you been retired?

I'm not a retired officer

I have been retired fewer than 5 years

I have been retired between 5 – 10 years

I have been retired longer than 10 years

4. How many years have you served as an officer?

0

1-3

4-10

Over 10 years

5. Your current age:

18-35 years

36-55 years

56 and older

6. How many children do you have?

None

1

2

3

4

5 or more

7. Below is a list of spiritual disciplines that could be practiced in the home. Please indicate which ones you REGULARLY practice(d) at home while serving as an officer. Check all that apply.

Bible study

Sabbath

Scripture memorization

Solitude

Prayer

Service

Devotions

Tithing

Fasting

Generosity

Other (please specify)

8. Of the spiritual disciplines that are (were) regularly practiced in your home, which are the TOP Three (3) that you believe contributed the MOST to your children's spiritual formation. Select only three disciplines.

Bible study

Sabbath

Scripture memorization

Solitude

Prayer

Service

Devotions

Tithing

Fasting

Generosity

Other (please specify)

9. Of the spiritual disciplines that are (were) regularly practiced in your home, which are the TOP Three (3) that you believe contributed the LEAST to your children's spiritual formation. Select only three disciplines.

Bible study

Sabbath

Scripture memorization

Solitude

Prayer

Service

Devotions

Tithing

Fasting

Generosity

Other (please specify)

10. Officership carries many responsibilities and opportunities. Sometimes ministry responsibilities can compete with the practice of spiritual disciplines. Of the spiritual disciplines listed, which ONE do you find is the most challenging to practice? (Select only one option.)

Bible study

Sabbath

Scripture memorization

Solitude

Prayer

Service

Devotions

Tithing

Fasting

Generosity

Other (please specify)

The remaining questions address how responsibilities required of officership within The Salvation Army could impact the lives of children in a family.

11. What responsibilities and opportunities do you have as an officer that you believe contribute in a positive way to your child(ren)'s spiritual health?

12. What responsibilities do you have as an officer that you believe contribute in a negative way to your child(ren)'s spiritual health?

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

13. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **emotional health**.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

14. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

15. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **social/relational health**.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

16. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

17. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **educational** progress.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

18. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

19. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **educational** progress.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

20. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

21. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **spiritual** health.

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

22. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

23. As you look back over the time that you have served as an officer, what aspects of the responsibilities have had positive impacts on your child(ren)?

24. If your children / family have experienced adverse impacts in any of the above areas, how have spiritual disciplines helped you overcome these challenges?

APPENDIX C

RAW DATA FROM ONLINE SURVEY METHODOLOGY INSTRUMENT

<u>Total Surveys Emailed</u>	<u>Total Participants</u>	<u>% of Participants</u>
940 Active Officers	389	68.8
556 Retired Officers	172	30.4
4 Former Officers	4	0.7
Skipped	6	1.1

Salvation Army Officership, Spiritual Disciplines and The Family

1. You are:

Male	267
Female	299
Skipped	5

2. Your current status within The Salvation Army is:

Active Officer	389
Retired Officer	172
Former Officer	4
Not an Officer	0
Skipped	6

3. If you are a retired officer, how long have you been retired?

I'm not a retired officer	382
I have been retired fewer than 5 years	56
I have been retired between 5 – 10 years	53
I have been retired longer than 10 years	65
Skipped	15

4. How many years have you served as an officer?

0	1
1-3	46

4-10	100
Over 10 years	419
Skipped	5

5. Your current age:

18-35 years	63
36-55 years	209
56 and older	292
Skipped	7

6. How many children do you have?

None	57
1	65
2	206
3	158
4	58
5 or more	24
Skipped	3

7. Below is a list of spiritual disciplines that could be practiced in the home. Please indicate which ones you REGULARLY practice(d) at home while serving as an officer. Check all that apply.

Bible study	306
Scripture memorization	113
Prayer	404
Devotions	353
Fasting	65
Sabbath	215
Solitude	108
Service	321
Tithing	381
Generosity	265

Other (please specify)	17
Skipped	160

8. Of the spiritual disciplines that are (were) regularly practiced in your home, which are the TOP Three (3) that you believe contributed the MOST to your children's spiritual formation. Select only three disciplines.

Bible study	140
Scripture memorization	43
Prayer	353
Devotions	242
Fasting	3
Sabbath	83
Solitude	15
Service	155
Tithing	117
Generosity	81
Other (please specify)	8
Skipped	152

9. Of the spiritual disciplines that are (were) regularly practiced in your home, which are the TOP Three (3) that you believe contributed the LEAST to your children's spiritual formation. Select only three disciplines.

Bible study	55
Scripture memorization	74
Prayer	13
Devotions	48
Fasting	197
Sabbath	118
Solitude	205
Service	74
Tithing	125

Generosity	60
Other (please specify)	3
Skipped	180

10. Officership carries many responsibilities and opportunities. Sometimes ministry responsibilities can compete with the practice of spiritual disciplines. Of the spiritual disciplines listed, which ONE do you find is the most challenging to practice? (Select only one option.)

Bible study	50
Scripture memorization	64
Prayer	7
Devotions	29
Fasting	78
Sabbath	106
Solitude	75
Service	2
Generosity	2
Other (please specify)	2
Skipped	154

The remaining questions address how responsibilities required of officership within The Salvation Army could impact the lives of children in a family.

11. What responsibilities and opportunities do you have as an officer that you believe contribute in a positive way to your child(ren)'s spiritual health?

Participants	391
Skipped	180

12. What responsibilities do you have as an officer that you believe contribute in a negative way to your child(ren)'s spiritual health?

Participants	381
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Skipped 190

To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

13. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **emotional health**.

Strongly disagree	49
Disagree	83
Neutral	62
Agree	152
Strongly agree	61
Skipped	154

14. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

Participants	221
Skipped	350

15. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **social/relational** health.

Strongly disagree	51
Disagree	109
Neutral	86
Agree	114
Strongly agree	47
Skipped	164

16. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

Participants	198
Skipped	373

17. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **educational** progress.

Strongly disagree	74
Disagree	109
Neutral	71
Agree	99
Strongly agree	54
Skipped	164

18. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

Participants	219
Skipped	352

19. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **physical** progress.

Strongly disagree	109
Disagree	152
Neutral	95
Agree	34
Strongly agree	16
Skipped	165

20. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

Participants	219
Skipped	352

21. Some of my officership responsibilities have had an adverse impact on one of my children's **spiritual** health.

Strongly disagree	80
Disagree	124
Neutral	70
Agree	105
Strongly agree	28
Skipped	164

22. Optional: Feel free to comment on the previous question.

Participants	168
Skipped	403

23. As you look back over the time that you have served as an officer, what aspects of the responsibilities have had positive impacts on your child(ren)?

Participants	372
Skipped	199

24. If your children / family have experienced adverse impacts in any of the above areas, how have spiritual disciplines helped you overcome these challenges?

Participants	307
Skipped	264

APPENDIX D

WEBINAR OUTLINE¹

Video #1: Introduction

Welcome. I'm Captain Jonathan Gainey. Are you confident when sharing the Gospel and helping others follow Jesus but you struggle to do the same with your own children? For those of you who answered yes, you're in good company. Discipling one's children is a challenge for many Christian parents. In the six videos of this webinar, you will discover four spiritual practices that you can use to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of your children, regardless of their age.

Salvation Army officer parents, along with all Christian parents, are commanded to prioritize the spiritual development of their children by presenting practices that can enable them to develop faith that bears fruit. Discipling your children means providing opportunities for them to develop godly character. However, just as it was a challenge for Jesus when teaching his disciples, you will also experience challenges when discipling your own children.

The requirements of officer families, like most clergy families, include inherent challenges, such as a heavy workload, busy travel schedules, and frequent appointment changes, that can adversely affect the spiritual lives of officers and their children. Therefore, the need to be familiar with the spiritual disciplines that officer families can practice at home is integral to positively facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of your children. The Salvation Army, like other Protestant denominations, experiences a range of spiritual maturity development within the lives of clergy members' children. This range includes children who become officers themselves,

1. To watch the webinar "Spiritual Formation for TSA Officer Families," go to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcLVP73eLF6NkVPE8pvuIqQ>.

to children who are dedicated Christians serving in active ministries in adulthood, to children with nominal Christian faith, and even to children who reject the Christian faith. Fortunately, there is overwhelming evidence that parents, who regularly practice spiritual disciplines at home with their children, are more likely to see their children develop fruit-bearing faith throughout their lives.

Because officer families live busy, itinerate lives, it is vitally important that the spiritual formation of every officers' child is given a proper position in the priority of family life. When officer parents prioritize the spiritual formation of their children, they are imitating Jesus, who, as a parent-like leader, facilitated spiritual maturity in the lives of his disciples. As Merrill Tenny wrote, "Jesus looked upon [his disciples] as spiritual children who need the strong protection and guidance of a parent in order to survive."²

Following Jesus' model of parent-like discipleship, officer parents, and all Christian parents, are commanded by Scripture to lead their children to become imitators of Christ. Parents, who invite their children, as Jesus invited his disciples, to participate in regularly practiced disciplines in the intimate and private setting of home, are more likely to see positive formation in the spiritual lives of their children.

The four spiritual practices are those used by highly devoted Christian youth, and are those based on the studies of ordained United Methodist Pastor and Professor of Youth, Church and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. Kenda Dean, in her book, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. With slight modifications to

2. Merrill C. Tenney, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with The New International Version of The Holy Bible, (John – Acts) Volume 9*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 147.

the titles shared by Dr. Kenda Dean, the four spiritual practices that I will teach you to use in this series of six, short videos are:

1. Claiming a Creed
2. Belonging to a Community
3. Pursuing a Call
4. Confessing Confidence

Before we go on, I want to share 3 important reminders:

1. It is notable that Jesus did not force his followers to participate in his provisions of spiritually forming opportunities; he invited them to participate, and they chose whether to participate in, and appropriate, Jesus' invitations to these means of grace that could lead to spiritual maturity.
2. Though there are no guarantees that regularly practicing spiritual disciplines at home will result in highly committed Christian children, with the participation and power of the Holy Spirit, these means of grace can be transformed into tools that help to develop fruit-bearing faith in the children of officers.
3. The sixth video of this series is a list of considerations to keep in mind when introducing and sharing these spiritual practices with your children.

In the next five videos of this presentation, I will help you better understand the four spiritual disciplines that you can practice at home to facilitate spiritual maturity in the lives of your children.

Video #2: Claiming a Creed

The first spiritual practice that we will discuss is Claiming a Creed.

What is a creed?

A creed is the story about Jesus that the children are taught to confess, which instills in them an understanding of why Jesus is worthy of following. A creed is also defined as “a summary statement of Christian faith and belief.”³ The spiritual practice of Claiming a Creed is exemplified in the well-known, creedal words of John 3:16-17, when John writes, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (NIV)

What does it mean for a Salvation Army officer family to Claim a Creed?

1. It means choosing a statement that answers 2 important questions, “Does Jesus want to save me?” and “Does Jesus have the power to save me?”
2. To claim a creed means memorizing and reciting a statement that instills faith and hope in Christ and his promise to save every person who trusts in him.

Some practical examples of a creed that can be claimed by an officer family include:

1. The memorization and regular recitation of a passage of Scripture such as:
 - a. "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." (Mt 16:15-16 NIV)
 - b. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt 28:18-20 NIV)
 - c. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (Jn 3:16-17 NIV)
2. Another example of a creed that can be claimed by an officer family is the Apostle's Creed or

3. Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, & Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 1999), 33.

the Nicene Creed, which can be memorized and shared as a reminder of the power of Christ to save.

3. A third example of a creed that can be claimed by an officer family is a liturgical response that can be memorized and recited as a reminder of the power of Christ to save, such as that shared by Cameron Cole, the director of children, youth, and family at Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama, and chairman of Rooted: Advancing Grace-Driven Youth Ministry, which includes three short questions and three short answers:

Question: What is the Gospel?

Answer: The Good News!

Question: What is the Good News for you and your neighbor?

Answer: Christ died to save us from our sins!

Question: What is the Good News for the whole world?

Answer: Christ is King!”

Reinforcing the creed can be accomplished by posting the creed on the family’s refrigerator or on a bathroom or bedroom mirror, by creating a painting or another piece of art that includes the creed and is posted on a wall in the home; and, most simply and effectively, by randomly and regularly reciting the creed to one another at home or in the car.

Why is Claiming a Creed so important for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of officers?

Claiming a creed is the discipline of articulating one’s faith, which is vitally important for anyone’s spiritual formation and maturity. As Christian Smith and Melinda Denton reveal as a result of their research, known as the National Study of Youth and Religion, which is recorded in their often-quoted, influential book, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, “. . . religious faith, practice, and commitment can be no more than

vaguely real when people cannot talk much about them.”⁴ The spiritual practice of claiming a creed is the discipline that instills an understanding of why Jesus is worthy of following.

Video #3: Belonging to a Community

The second spiritual practice that we will discuss is Belonging to a Community.

What is a Community?

Jesus began with a close-knit community of 12 followers. To these initial, 12 followers, Jesus devoted himself to showing them how they could imitate him and commit themselves to loving one another as he loved them.

The community that children of Salvation Army officers belong to starts with the immediate family in which the children have a confident sense of belonging, a definite role of participation, and the recognition of unconditional love.

The spiritual practice of Belonging to a Community is justified by the words of Jesus, who said in John 13:34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (NIV)

What does it mean for an officer family to Belong to a Community?

1. It means officer parents live their faith at home, in the presence of their children, e.g., they frequently read the Bible, pray, and habitually seek wisdom from Christ and Scripture before making difficult decisions.
2. Belonging to a Community means the officer home is one in which Jesus is a consistent, and appropriate, part of the family's activities, conversations, and considerations.
3. Belonging to a Community means the officer family incorporates their faith into the greater

4. Christian Smith and Melina Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 269.

family of God in the corps and in the community.

Some practical examples of Belonging to A Community in an officer family include:

1. Encouraging the children to share their difficulties, failures, and sins while the officer parents maintain good parenting skills that include a healthy level of emotional maturity, good listening skills, effective disciplinary strategies, and Christ-like grace.
2. Using the name, “Jesus,” intentionally and often when speaking of, teaching about, and praying to the One whose image is the goal of Christian formation.
3. Regularly recognizing, remembering, and mentioning the presence of Jesus as the family goes about daily routines at home, at the corps, and in the community.

Why is Belonging to a Community so important for facilitating spiritual maturity in the children of officers?

The spiritual practice of belonging to a community helps children grow spiritually at home as a part of a family that lives out the story of Christ together. The immediate family serves as a model of Christian community, reminding the children that following Jesus is not an individual pursuit but is lived out as the body of Christ. The children’s faith is further strengthened as they, along with the rest of their immediate family, practice their faith by serving neighbors and others in the corps and in the greater community.

Video #4: Pursuing a Call

The third spiritual practice that we will discuss is Pursuing a Call.

What is a call?

Jesus first called his disciples to be disciples, and then he called them to be disciple-makers. As disciples, Jesus’ inner-circle of followers received a call that went beyond each of the disciples’ personal actions and individual futures. The call Jesus’ disciples received was an

invitation to give themselves for the purposes of God—to serve rather than be served.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."⁵

Pursuing a call is the understanding that Jesus is calling every child to contribute to a greater purpose for the kingdom of God. As Os Guinness states in his seminal book, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, "Answering the call of our Creator is 'the ultimate why' for living, the highest source of purpose in human existence."⁶

What does it mean to Pursue a Call in a Salvation Army officer family?

1. The children are learning that they live in a morally significant universe and, therefore, their decisions affect other people, including, and most significantly, the members of their immediate family. Although, the culture of today wants our children to believe their own needs and desires are all that is truly important, Christians recognize that we are called to consider others. As Paul the Apostle wrote in his letter to the Philippians:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (Phil 2:3 NIV)

2. The children are learning that each member of the family has a moral responsibility to look out for the well-being of the other family members.

Some practical examples of Pursuing a Call in an officer family include:

1. The children's participation in caring for the home, in sharing the responsibilities of taking care of pets, and by doing whatever is necessary, and age-appropriate, to help mitigate family

5. Matt 20:25-28 NIV.

6. Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 2003), 4.

stress.

2. The children's participation in planning and implementing helpful service projects that benefit family members, neighbors, corps members, and the greater community.
3. The use of a family advent calendar that includes activities focused on helping one another in the household, and in the neighborhood and the corps, rather than an advent calendar that provides a treat or a gift for the children themselves.
4. The children can put together and deliver (or mail) a care package to a college student, can babysit for a busy couple, can bake cookies and include a handwritten prayer for a grieving person or family, or they can adopt a road to keep clean in the neighborhood.
5. The children can begin the habit of tithing from their allowance or monetary gifts, by putting aside 10% as soon as they receive their allowance or other monetary gifts.

Why is the spiritual practice of Pursuing a Call important for an officer family?

The spiritual practice of pursuing a call helps children discover where they are spiritually gifted and how the Holy Spirit is calling and preparing each of them to participate in the body of Christ. Furthermore, pursuing a call helps children recognize the power of Christ that is experienced through caring for, and serving, others.

Video #5: Confessing Confidence

The fourth spiritual practice that we will discuss is Confessing Confidence.

What is confessing confidence?

It was during the disciples' most insecure, uncertain, and fearful experience of hearing of Jesus' imminent departure that Jesus exhorted his followers to trust him just as they trust God and to have confidence in his eschatological promise:

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."⁷

The spiritual practice of confessing confidence is the act of teaching children that God is bringing them, and the world, to an ultimate good, despite the level of chaos they may see or experience.

What does the spiritual practice of Confessing Confidence mean to a Salvation Army officer family?

1. Confessing Confidence means the children are learning that life has meaning because they are accompanied by Christ; therefore, they have what they need to face the present.
2. Confessing Confidence means the parents in the home of the officer family are intentional about sharing Scripture and devotions, observing family fasts, and modeling a sense of spiritually driven hope.

Some practical examples of Confessing Confidence in an officer family include:

1. Exemplifying and teaching the children to be intentional about going to Jesus and Scripture for wisdom before making decisions, while discussing challenges, and when facing difficulties.
2. Memorizing Scripture as a family, and posting Scripture passages on the refrigerator, bathroom mirrors, or table settings, and as forms of art in the home, all of which specifically focus on reminding children that Jesus is in control of the world and their futures.
3. Offering the opportunity for children to give their testimony. As Dr. Kenda Dean explains, sharing testimonies gives children the chance to recognize how Christ's activities in the world have actively merged with their own lives.⁸

7. John 14:2-4 NIV.

Why is the spiritual practice of Confessing Confidence important for an officer family?

The spiritual practice of confessing confidence helps children face present difficulties, while having confidence in Christ's control of the future. This practice empowers them to trust Jesus so that the anxiety, which is prevalent among so many young people today, is also diminished.

Video #6: Considerations

In this sixth and final video, I am going to share some considerations that you should keep in mind when sharing the four spiritual practices of claiming a creed, belonging to a community, pursuing a call, and confessing confidence.

Age of Children

The age of the children has a bearing on the form and method of practicing spiritual disciplines in the home of a Salvation Army officer family. Developmentally, children at one stage of life will welcome some forms and methods of practicing spiritual disciplines in the home but will reject other forms and methods. For example, preschoolers and high school students have different ways of seeing the world. Preschoolers are imagination driven and high school students are philosophical thinkers,⁹ which means coloring a picture of Jesus during family devotions might work well with a preschooler, whereas a high school aged teen might better respond to a discussion about doubts and apologetics. The age of the children will also influence when parents will be able to practice spiritual disciplines with their children at home. The younger the child, the more available they are to their parent's schedules; but, as they get

8. Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (New York, NY, Oxford University Press, 2010), 146.

9. Reggie Joiner and Kristen Ivy, *It's Just a Phase so Don't Miss It: Why Every Life Stage of a Kid Matters and at Least 13 Things Your Church Should Do About It* (Cumming, GA: Orange, 2015), 155.

older, it may only be during meals and bedtimes that a parent can spend quality time with them for things like praying, doing devotions, or reading a line or two of Scripture. However, it is important that parents use some of the time available to practice spiritual disciplines as a family in the home, because children who practice spiritual disciplines at home are more likely to develop generative faith—faith that bears fruit.

Presentation

Like a good meal, presentation is important. When practicing spiritual disciplines at home, adding a touch of “different” can change what might be just another reading of the Bible into a ceremony that is unique enough to create a life-long, spiritually rich habit in the life of a child. As Marjorie Thompson wrote, “Ritual gives form to the formless Spirit.”¹⁰ For example, an action as simple as lighting a candle at the table during devotions, or getting on one’s knees to pray, can transform a few minutes of reading a story out of a devotional book, or praying before bedtime with the family, into a memory-making moment in the presence of Jesus. It is also important to remember that the opportunity to share in a spiritual practice with family is an invitation from a loving parent—not a mandate from a dictator. If tension enters the practice, the spiritual benefits of the practice may be lost and resentment about the practice may develop.

The presentation of spiritual practices in the home is influenced by the spiritual and emotional maturity of the parents; therefore, the invitation to participate in these means of grace requires the parents to model the Christ-like grace and patience of a genuine shepherd of Christ’s sheep. As Kenda Dean reminds her readers, “In the end, awakening faith does not depend on how hard we press young people to love God, but on how much we show them we do.”¹¹

10. Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family the Forming Center: A Vision of the Role of Family in Spiritual Formation*, rev. and expanded ed., (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1996), 91.

Confidence

Many parents have a fear that their children will respond negatively to practicing spiritual disciplines at home; however, most children, including teens, are more willing to practice spiritual disciplines,¹² especially when they are celebratory.¹³ Parents should expect their children to participate in, and provide meaningful responses to, questions and discussions about God, the Bible, and Jesus, because, in contrast to what most parents believe, most teens, like younger children, are teachable and want to be taught about faith, even when they behave as if they do not.¹⁴

Model the Way

Unless parents model the way to practicing spiritual disciplines, practicing them at home with the children will have little effect. This is what Christian Smith and Melinda Denton mean, when they write, “The best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities.”¹⁵ Children are more influenced by seeing their parents practice spiritual disciplines, such as reading the Bible, praying on their knees, and getting up early to do devotions, than they are by having their parents read the Bible to, and pray with, them. Modeling spiritual practices in the home begins with the parents making the regular practice of spiritual disciplines an important part of their own lives. The faith of children, including teens and young adults, is most influenced by the faith of their parents, regardless of what parents may assume;

11. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 120.

12. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

13. Thompson, *Family*, 141.

14. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

15. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

therefore, parents can be assured that, in most cases, they “will get what they are,”¹⁶ religiously speaking.

Consistency

The amount of time the family spends practicing spiritual disciplines is less important than their own consistency in practicing and modeling them.¹⁷ Living the message does more to influence the spiritual formation of a child than words.¹⁸ Salvation Army officers’ lives are typically filled with ministerial, administrative, and travel responsibilities that leave little time for the most important responsibility of facilitating spiritual maturity in the lives of their children; however, practicing these spiritual disciplines in the home does not require hours of activity; it only requires that parents practice spiritual disciplines consistently. When traveling, some of these practices can be done over the phone—perhaps through a Skype or FaceTime call. Others can be practiced by leaving a text of a short passage of Scripture, a word of prayer, or a devotional story left on the pillow of a child. There is always a way for parents to invest in the most important aspect of their children’s lives—the regular practice of spiritual disciplines, which visibly exemplify the soul-saving story, the ongoing presence, and the unwavering promises of Christ.

Grandparents

The itinerant lifestyle of Salvation Army officer parents, who can expect to move often and far away from extended family, still allows for officers to influence the spiritual lives of their grandchildren. Younger generations are peculiarly influenced by the faith of parents and

16. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 261.

17. Thompson, *Family*, 89.

18. Thompson, *Family*, 23.

grandparents, as is evidenced throughout history.¹⁹ Grandchildren are greatly influenced by their grandparents' responses to life's tragedies and celebrations, which can have an indelible influence on the grandchildren's spiritual formation. Grandparents, whose faith is seen as having evidence of unconditional trust in, and love for, Jesus can use their wisdom, grace, and love to share Jesus with their grandchildren in powerful ways. For example, grandparents can influence the spiritual formation of their grandchildren during an occasional visit, a phone call, or through the means of mailed gifts, such as a Bible or age-appropriate devotional book, Christmas and Birthday cards that include Scripture and a written prayer, and other gifts that represent faith in Christ, such as jewelry that includes a cross or another Christian symbol.

Why Practice Spiritual Disciplines as a Salvation Army Officer Family?

The world would have us believe that faith has no influence on the well-being and livelihood of a person. However, there is overwhelming evidence that suggests faith and spiritual practices have meaningful and positive effects on the lives of children, which help in the development of healthy, productive, hopeful lives.²⁰ Although children, teens, and young adults may complain about, or question, the purpose and significance of practicing spiritual disciplines as a family, the empirical evidence shows that religious faith and practice has proven to be a significantly powerful and positive influence in the overall lives of children and adults.²¹ Therefore, Salvation Army officer parents should be encouraged to know that their spiritual influence can have a positive effect on every aspect of their children's lives.

19. Thompson, *Family*, 111.

20. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 263.

21. Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 263.

No Guarantees

Keep in mind that practicing spiritual disciplines in the home with children offers no guarantee that one's children will become committed followers of Jesus. Marjorie Thompson asserts, "Spiritual disciplines are like garden tools. The best [shovel] and rake cannot guarantee healthy fruit; they can only help create less obstructed conditions for growth."²² These spiritual practices are means of grace that the Holy Spirit can use to transform children's lives into the form of Christ, which is the goal of Christian formation.²³ A parent's responsibilities include presenting Christ to their children, but it is the child's responsibility to appropriate the opportunities, lessons, and practices that are presented to them. As Tedd Tripp writes, "Your children are responsible for the way they respond to your parenting."²⁴ Practicing spiritual disciplines requires humility in the parents, who understand that they do not give Jesus to their children—Jesus is already with their children.²⁵ As the primary means of spiritual leadership in the family, parents present a living expression of their life with Jesus as they model and invite their children to participate in these means of grace as well.

These four spiritual practices do not guarantee Salvation Army officers' children will love and commit their lives to Jesus. Parents cannot give faith to their children, but can only encourage and affirm their children's faith by the way the parents express and share their own conviction, passion, and commitment to Christ.²⁶ Ultimately, Christians rely on the Holy Spirit's

22. Thompson, *Family*, 16.

23. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 50.

24. Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, 2nd ed. (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2005), 16.

25. Dean, *Almost Christian*, 104-5.

26. Thompson, *Family*, 69.

incarnational power and presence to transform these spiritual practices into means of helping the children of officers:

1. Trust Christ to save them,
2. Participate in the body of Christ,
3. Discover the call of Christ for their lives, and
4. Confess confidence in the future provided by Christ.

My dear fellow Salvation Army officers, it is my prayer that you and your children will be greatly blessed by practicing the spiritual disciplines of Claiming a Creed, Belonging to a Community, Pursuing a Call, and Confessing Confidence as a family.

APPENDIX E

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES OUTLINE MANUAL FOR SALVATION ARMY OFFICER FAMILIES

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17 NIV)

Claiming A Creed

A creed is the story about God that the children are taught to confess, which instills in them an understanding of why this God is worthy of following.

What It Means to Claim A Creed in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. The creed that is claimed by the Salvation Army officer family answers the questions, “Does Jesus want to save me?” and “Does Jesus have the power to save me?”
2. The family has adopted and memorized a creed that instills faith and hope in Christ and his promises to save every person who trusts in him.

Practical Examples of Claiming A Creed in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. A passage of Scripture, such as John 3:16-17, Matthew 16:15-16, or Matthew 28:18-20 can be memorized and used as a reminder that Jesus wants to, and has the power to, save.
2. An ancient creed, such as the Apostle’s Creed or the Nicene Creed, can be memorized and used as a reminder of the power of Christ to save.
3. A liturgical response reading can be memorized and used as a reminder of the power of Christ to save, such as that written by Cameron Cole, which states (my paraphrase),

Question: What is the Gospel?

Answer: The Good News!

Question: What is the Good News for you and your neighbor?

Answer: Christ died to save us from our sins!

Question: What is the Good News for the whole world?

Answer: Christ is King!”

4. The creed can be posted on bathroom mirrors, added to art as wall decorations, and occasionally recited to one another at home or in the car.

The spiritual practice of claiming a creed in the home of a Salvation Army officer family is the discipline that instills an understanding of why Jesus is worthy of following. Claiming a creed enables the children of Salvation Army officers to articulate faith in Christ.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
(John 13:34 NIV)

Belonging to A Community

The community the children belong to starts with the immediate family in which the children have a confident sense of belonging, a definite role of participation, and the recognition of unconditional love.

What It Means to Belong to A Community in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. Salvation Army officer parents live their faith at home, e.g., regularly read the Bible, pray, and habitually seek wisdom from Christ and Scripture when making decisions, etc.
2. The Salvation Army officer home is one in which Jesus is a consistent part of their activities, conversations, and considerations.
3. The Salvation Army officer family incorporates their faith into the greater family of God in the corps and in the community.

Practical Examples of Belonging to A Community in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. Encourage the children to share their difficulties, failures, and sins while maintaining good parenting skills that include a healthy level of emotional maturity, good listening skills, effective disciplinary strategies, and Christ-like grace.
2. Use the name, "Jesus," intentionally and often, when speaking of, teaching about, and praying to the One whose image is the goal of Christian formation.
3. Regularly recognize, remember, and mention the presence of Jesus as the family goes about daily routines at home, at the corps, and in the community.

The spiritual practice of belonging to a community helps children to grow spiritually at home as a part of a family that lives out the story of Christ together. The immediate family serves as a model of Christian community, reminding the children that following Jesus is not an individual pursuit but is lived out as the body of Christ. The children's faith is further strengthened as they, along with the rest of their immediate family, practice their faith by serving neighbors and others in the corps and the greater community.

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (John 15:16 NIV)

Pursuing A Call

The spiritual practice of pursuing a call gives the children of Salvation Army officers an understanding that Jesus is calling each of them to contribute to a greater purpose.

What It Means to Pursue A Call in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. The children are learning that their decisions affect the other members of the family.
2. The children are learning that each member of the family has a moral responsibility to look out for the well-being of the other family members.

Practical Examples of Pursuing A Call in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. The children can participate in caring for the home, sharing the responsibilities of taking care of pets, and doing what is necessary, and age-appropriate, to help mitigate family stress.
2. The children can participate in service projects to help family members, neighbors, corps members, and the greater community.
3. The use of a family advent calendar that includes activities, which are focused on helping one another and neighbors, rather than an advent calendar that provides a treat or a gift for the children themselves.
4. The children can put together and deliver (or mail) a care package to a college student, babysit for a busy couple, bake cookies and include a handwritten prayer for a grieving person or family, or adopt a road to keep clean in the neighborhood.
5. The children can begin the habit of tithing from their allowance or monetary gifts, by putting aside 10% as soon as the allowance or gift is received.

The spiritual practice of pursuing a call in the home helps children develop their understanding of where they are spiritually gifted and how the Holy Spirit is calling and preparing them to participate in the body of Christ. Pursuing a call helps the children of officers recognize the power of Christ that is experienced through caring for others.

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
(John 14:2-3 NIV)

Confessing Confidence

The spiritual practice of confessing confidence teaches the children of Salvation Army officers that God is bringing them and the world to an ultimate good, despite the level of chaos that may exist around them.

What It Means to Confess Confidence in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. The children are learning that life has meaning because they are accompanied by Christ; therefore, they have what they need to face the present.
2. The Salvation Army officer parents are intentional about sharing Scripture and devotions and modeling a sense of spiritually driven hope.

Practical Examples of Confessing Confidence in A Salvation Army Officer Family:

1. As Salvation Army officer parents, be intentional about going to Jesus and Scripture for wisdom before making decisions and while discussing challenges or facing difficulties.
2. Memorize Scripture as a family, and post Scripture passages on the refrigerator, bathroom mirrors, or table settings, and as forms of art in the home, all of which are focused on reminding children that Jesus is in control of the world and their futures.
3. Offer the opportunity for children to give their testimony. Sharing testimonies gives children the opportunity to recognize how Christ's activities in the world have actively merged with the children's lives, which is experienced as an encounter with Christ's faithfulness.

The spiritual practice of confessing confidence helps children to face present difficulties, while having confidence in Christ's control of the future. This practice empowers them to trust Jesus so that the anxiety, which is prevalent among so many young people today, is also diminished.

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